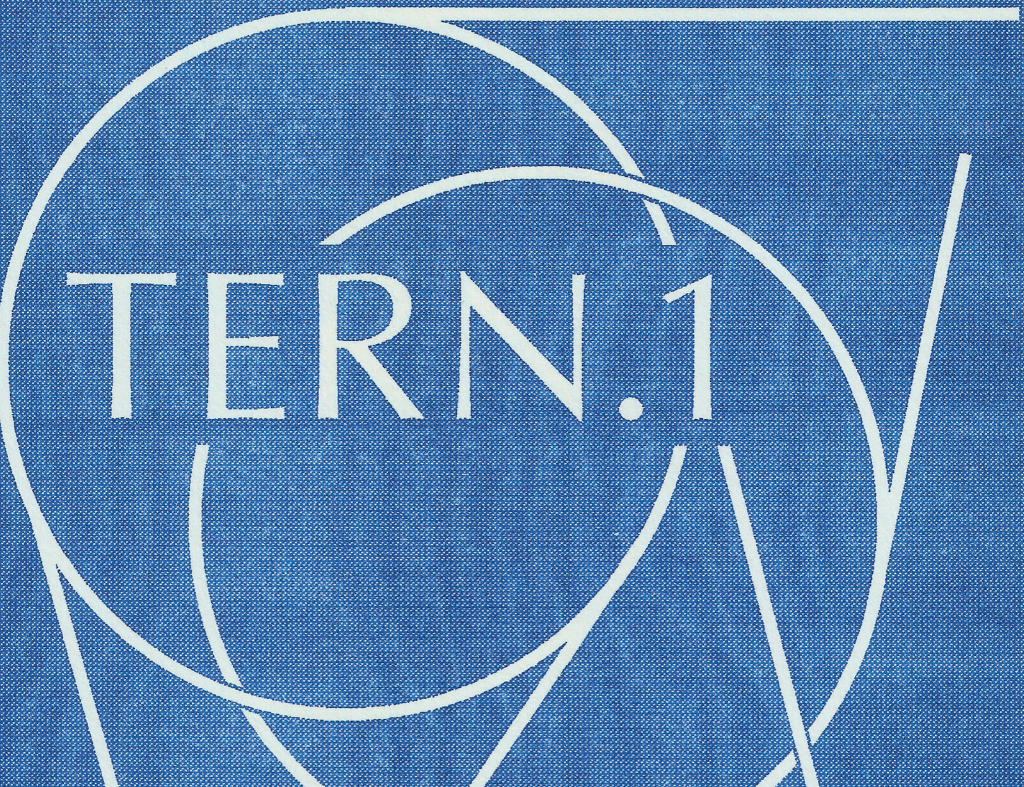

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TIER
The Institute for
Endotic Research

# The Endotic Reader № 1

This reader was published on the occasion marking the celebration of the first anniversary of The Institute for Endotic Research at Donaustrasse 84. It was produced as part of TIER's contribution to the Project Space Festival Berlin 2019 on the 11th of June. Departing from the exhibition Druck Druck Druck at Galerie im Körnerpark, this publication was launched with a reading walk composed of five reading stops in the neighbourhood, with John Holten, Barbara Marcel, Vanessa Gravenor, Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung and Pia Chakraverti-Wuerthwein.

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# Editors’ Introduction

01. The *endotic*[1] is a subtle but powerful tool to generate a situated practice of an institution. It is subtle because it looks to the imperceptible of the everyday life, to the visible but hidden details of the space and gestures of bodies around us. It rescues the astonishment from the forgotten obvious, trapped by its naturalization. It is a powerful tool because it leads us to read and listen to our surroundings, always looking from unexplored stances. From this immanent display, the very local traces a priceless threshold from which to approach the complex global. In its well-known methodology, *Oulipo*—the group to which Perec belonged—was a great pioneer of crossing knowledge fields in order to practice a *critical fascination*. They developed a system in which constraints were an efficient driving force, merging mathematics, literature and artistic positions. These constraints can be translated from writing to cultural practice to think about spatial design, funding or ways of cooperation, looking for more sustainable practices.

02. In an interview about his approach from microhistory, historian Carlo Ginzburg pointed to the practice of Oulipo as a capital reference for his work. This methodological branch of the history adopted a similar attitude, changing the scale and the direction of the historical devices to look to smaller events and to listen to the relevance of the unwritten voices of dismissed subjects from hegemonic history. Embracing the techniques of Perec and Raymond Queneau, the aims of microhistory were to approach the rehearsal of history writing through the innumerable possibilities given by storytelling exercises and variations. They focus on the supposedly insignificant elements. Together with historical documents, other devices entered the area of meaning: Idioms, images, architectonic elements, material surfaces or even routes in a city can give us a vision of a relational cosmology. In that way, the voice and space can be considered sensors, aesthetic records that compose the tapestry of the social. In this fertile mesh, the endotic can bring contemporary art together with the rich artistic and cultural traditions of Berlin’s international inhabitants, in close collaboration with the intimate agency of the cultural practices of the neighbours.

---

[1] The *endotic* was an idea introduced by Georges Perec and was first published in “Cause Commune” in 1973 before it became part of his collection *L'Infra-ordinaire*. It later appeared in Georges Perec, *Species of Spaces and Other Pieces* (London: Penguin, 1974).

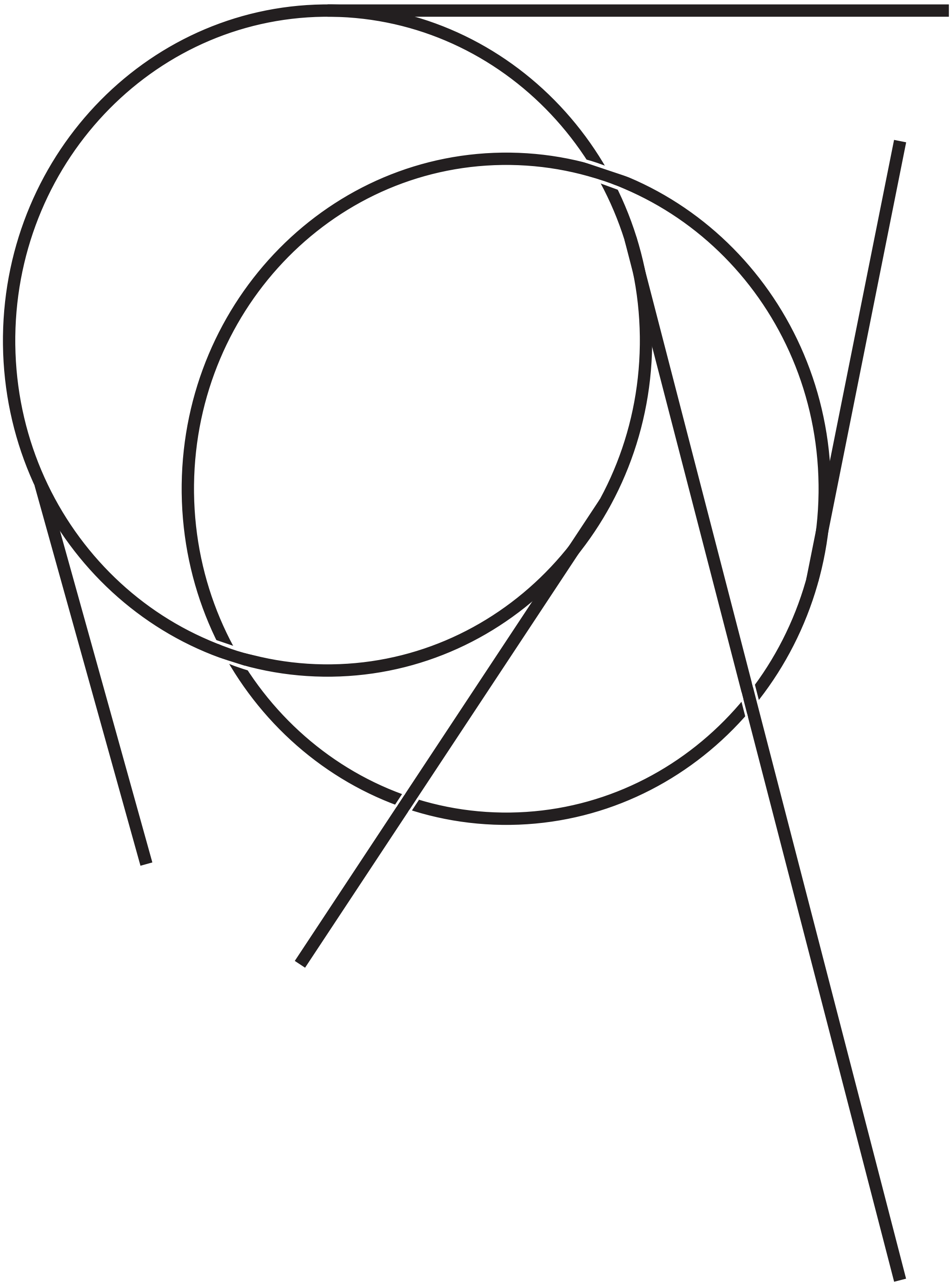
03. The body can be seen as an archive where the global and local fluxes collide, producing molecular traces. Preciado’s idea of the somatheque — bodies as archives — is closely connected with *übermateriality,* which is presented as substitute for the conjunction material/immaterial. Biocultural tracks tell us about the fleshy connections interwoven by social, economical and aesthetic practices in the texture of our bodies and environments. Digital signals produce synaptic reactions that stimulate parts of us, as much as global and local material production stimulates other areas of our anatomy. Understanding this über-connected reality through the practice of reading the traces, aesthetic and knowledge performance are key tools to release possible models. An institution would be placed in this constellation as a privileged location to read and produce the writing of the symbolic relations at stake.

04. Oscar Masotta used the word *ambiente* to describe the practice of some conceptual Argentinian artists in the 60’s and 70’s. The word was a translation from McLuhan’s idea of *media environment.* He was seeking for a description that could introduce a practice made of many elements, where objects, space, performance and even the general mood of the participants had a co-presence toward the construction of a general feeling of an artwork. The appealing element of this proposal is that instead of giving a *total* and closed definition of what was happening, this position was introduced as an atmosphere: a set that is composed by the different individual elements, but with each element having the agency to alter the totality of the composition. This sense of *ambiente* is what we are trying to develop at TIER. *The Endotic Reader N.1* is a printed mirror of that general atmosphere.

—Lorenzo Sandoval and Benjamin Busch, The Institute for Endotic Research

**Barbara Marcel**

# *Seven Crossroads: A Berlin Walkshop Ramble*



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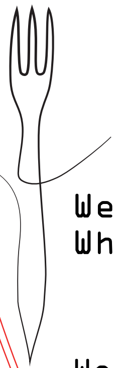
*Seven Crossroads: A Berlin Walkshop Ramble* is based by request on *Twelve Steps and A Hole in the Valley* that happened in the Hartz mountain in 2018, a walkshop in collaboration with Andreas Döpke, commissioned by the University of Hildesheim.

# SEVEN CROSSROADS

## A Berlin Walkshop Ramble

To Marcela Maria
(Mc Xuparina)



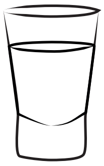
We vibrate, therefore we are.
What matters is the rite.

1. Welcome to Xberg. Before we get going, walk 7 steps in any direction and stand still for a moment. We are in no hurry to get anywhere. Rambling is another way to experience a place. Start rambling, that is, avoid walking in straight lines. What does it mean to be in this place? What does it mean to be at a crossroads?

2. Now look around and choose a direction. Immediately start walking, slowly, in any direction away from your point of departure. No matter if you have been here before, no matter where you come from. Walk around in silence for a while and observe how your body moves, aimless. How much does your spine bend? Hips: do they sway? Arms: do they swing? If you find yourself in a familiar space, opt for lesser known streets. It might be hard but try to get lost. You can walk in circles, repeat paths. The important thing now is to remain in motion. Have you ever thought about how your thinking is affected by the fact that your body is at rest or moving? Are the thoughts that come to mind when you are sitting any different to those you have when standing? Where do you usually have more ideas: in the shower at home or in the alleyway, in the streets and subway stations?

3. Stop at the first crossroads you come to and ask Exu for right of way. Also known as Aluvaiá to the Bantu people or Legbá to the Fon people, the Latin-American syncretic god Exu is the inhabitant of the crossroads. To open the paths and begin work, leave an offering, a gift, an Ebó. Enchant the ground by giving it something to eat or drink.

4. "Crossroads are places of enchantment for all peoples". Really? Let´s suppose so, just for a while. As such, they are places of mistrust, doubt and disorientation, and therefore expressive of powerful irrelevances. Crossroads become a necessary perspective in the attempt to cheat the death dished out by colonialism, death as disenchantment, brutal burden, and haunting. In the South Atlantic, the Christian cross was transformed into crossroads, the site of the crossings, passage. At the edges of modernity, crossroads are places of the refusal of the colonial project. Now, wait a minute. Hold the keys to your home while you observe what happens around here. Don't move until something unexpected occurs.



5. How much time in your life have you spent looking at strangers in the street? Can you find silence on a street full of people? There are 2.4 million rats in Berlin, and who knows how many of them live in Xberg? Bathing at night on Paul-Linke-Ufer. Can you hear them?
Now: If you have an audio device, listen to some blues music or a samba. If not, even better, just sing or whistle a song by heart. Come on, louder.

6. Crossroads might be the syncretic museums of all cultures dispossessed of their heritage. Cultures forced to migrate after being deterritorialized but insisting on practicing their rites on other equally contaminated, toxic and hungry soils. The crossroads are the immaterial vessels where diverse narratives and stories meet, collide and potentially exchange vital forces, updating themselves in the form of whispers, songs, offerings.
Naja: Talk to the street. Choose - or let yourself be chosen - by a passerby. You might need to make an agreement with this person. Maybe it is an economic one.

7. Leave the crossroads once the work is done. Exit by turning down the first street on the left. Avoid ever walking through the same crossroads again.

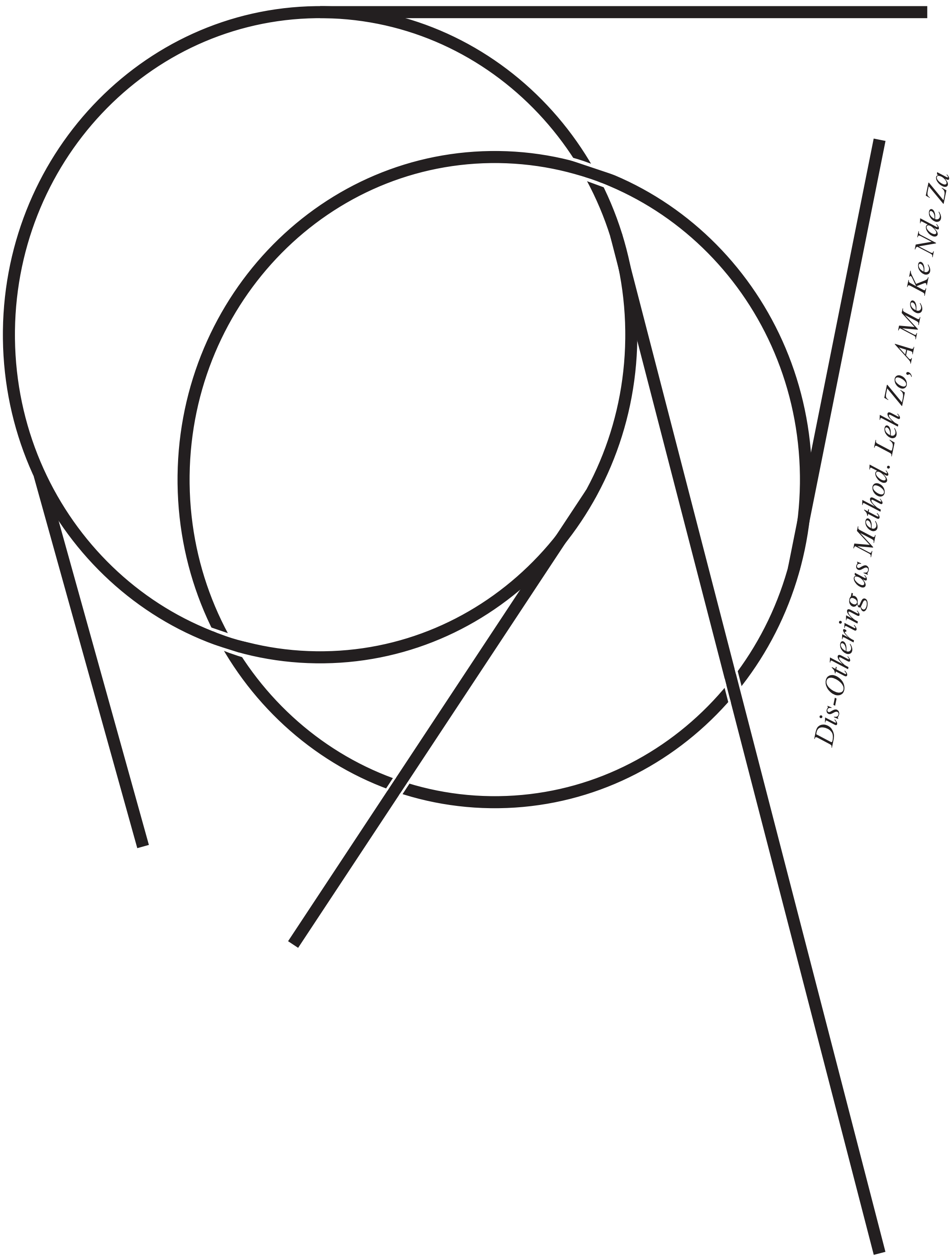
The first walkshop ramble experiment took place in the summer of 2018 in the anthropogenic region of the Harz, Germany, under the title 'Twelve steps and a hole in the valley'. Commissioned by the University of Hildesheim, the walkshop was created by artist Barbara Marcel in collaboration with the geographer Andreas Döpke and aimed to bring together students of various disciplines in the historic, cultural landscape of the western Harz, to reflect on false dichotomies such as nature-culture and rural-urban. Through a combination of collective and individual walking experiments, the World Heritage Site was set up as a temporary and dynamic station for the collaborative decolonial imagining of past and future landscapes.

As a further iteration of the Walkshop Ramble project, the piece printed here has a hybrid form, a mix of musical score, audio guide and whistling, inspired by the book The Enchanted Science of Macumbas (2018), by Brazilian *macumbeiros*[1] Luiz Antonio Simas and Luiz Rufino. Responding to an invitation to contribute to the first issue of The Endotic Reader, Barbara Marcel proposes a new experiment of walkshop ramble, suggesting a reticulation of knowledges that although not so evident, also inhabit the city of Berlin.

---

[1] To quote the beautiful introductory note of the book 'Fogo no Mato: A ciência encantada das macumbas', freely translated by me: "Macumbeiros: definition of bragging and political character, which subverts biased meanings attributed to the repudiated term "macumba" by admitting its impurities, contradictions and erasures as primal to an enchanted way of facing and reading the world, in grammar´s enlargements. The "macumbeiro" recognises the plentitude of beauty, of sofistication and of the peoples´ otherness.
The expression "macumba" very likely comes from the Quicongo (African etnolinguistic group) "kumba": sorcerer. The prefix "ma", in Quicongo, makes a plural. "Kumba" also designates the word´s sorcerers: the poets.
Macumba would be then the land of the spell poets; the word and body sorcerers, that can whip and annoy uncompromising reason. Furthermore, it proposes plural ways of reexistance through the radicality of spell,  amidst the illnesses generated by the castrative rectitude of the world as a singular death experience.

**Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung**



# Dis-Othering as Method. Leh Zo, A Me Ke Nde Za

**Bonaventure Soh Bejeng Ndikung** is an independent art curator and biotechnologist. He is the founder and artistic director of the art space SAVVY Contemporary Berlin and editor-in-chief of the journal SAVVY Journal for critical texts on contemporary African art.

*Dis-Othering as a Method: Leh Zo, A Me Ke Nde Za* was published as part of the booklet on the occasion of *Geographies of Imagination* at Savvy Contemporary in September 2018.

# DIS-OTHERING AS METHOD:
# LEH ZO, A ME KE NDE ZA

> I dislike interviews. I'm often asked the same question: What in your work comes from your own culture? As if I have a recipe and I can actually isolate the Arab ingredient, the woman ingredient, the Palestinian ingredient.
> People often expect tidy definitions of otherness, as if identity is something fixed and easily definable.
>
> Mona Hatoum, Interview with Janine Antoni,
> BOMB Magazine, 1998[1]

Just in the nick of time when we, by repetition and reiteration, start believing our own concepts that we have postulated and disseminated. Just at that point in time — t — when we think that notion of post-otherness,[2] which we have reflected upon for years in reference to that double moment of awareness and transition, we seem to be experiencing a quake that pushes us to reconsider, but not reject, the paradoxicality of the Post-Other moment,[3] reconsider who and how one bears historical Othering, reconsider the mechanisms of rendering Other, as well as reconsidering who represents whom or who tries to shape whose future in contemporary societies and discourses.

This quake has spurred the necessity to drop off prefixes and concentrate on root words. It seems as if to be able to do these reconsiderations, one needs to, at least temporarily, abrogate "Post-" to be able to situate "Otherness" within our day's context. Especially, taking into account that the "Post-" in Post-Otherness might be dangling on a cliff, threatening to fall either on the side of the "Post-" in "Postcolonial" – which doesn't imply an aftermath but rather intends to announce a continuity of an era shaped by its colonial past – or drop on the side of "Post-racial" – which tends to be a distraction from metamorphosed formats and technologies of racisms. At any rate, this proposal announces the descaling of the prefix in order to scrutinise "Otherness" properly.

This quake has been prompted by two random observations:

Firstly, if one, even with a minimum of sensitivity, took a glance at some current political highlights one is likely to hear the reverberations of discourses ranging from building walls to separate nations, "bad hombres" to the Islamisation of the Occident. As Sasha Polakow-Suransky put it in *The Ruthlessly Effective Rebranding of Europe's New Far Right:*

> They (the Right) have effectively claimed the progressive causes of the left – from gay rights to women's equality and protecting Jews from antisemitism – as their own, by depicting Muslim immigrants as the primary threat to all three groups. As fear of Islam has spread, with their encouragement, they have presented themselves as the only true defenders of western identity and western liberties – the last bulwark protecting a besieged Judeo-Christian civilisation from the barbarians at the gates.[4]

This becomes interesting as one observes the efforts of the right to co-opt certain historically "Othered" within their political strategies, brewing new alliances and forging common denominators that were regarded historically contradictory, while constructing other "Others" on which long cultivated angst, prejudices and resentments could be projected upon. This process should be understood as a cannibalisation of "Otherness" and a subsequent regurgitation of "Otherness."

For some historically "Othered," the only thing that has changed has been the mechanisms and methodologies through which they are objectified and othered. So, in our socio-political contemporary, one can observe an intensification in the construction and cultivation of "Otherness," morphing old conceptions of the "Other" to cloth new groups of people, while at the same time one can observe the appropriation of the "Other" for purposes profitable to the privileged and powerful.

Secondly, another tendency, especially within the context of the cultural industry, is the resurfacing of what one might call "geographical specification-ing," which is to say the need to put a spotlight on certain geographical regions. This is of course not a new phenomenon, especially within Western museum institutions, or other cultural infrastructures in which, based on certain culture-political agendas or strategies, certain geographical regions are put in and out of focus as they like. Some have seen this practice as part of what is termed "soft power," whereby culture is used as a means to gently exercise political power on certain cultural and social groups. Take for example a museum or library in France that chooses to put a spotlight on Algeria, in the hope that it would thereby appease the Algerian community in an effort to soothe or clean the wounds of its colonial past. Or take for example the British council, Goethe Institute, Institut Français et al opening cultural centres around the world to "promote culture." Soft power.

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[1] bombmagazine.org/article/2130/mona-hatoum

[2] Regina Römhild and Bonaventure Ndikung, "The Post-Other as Avant-Garde" in *We Roma: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art,* eds. Daniel Baker, Maria Hlavajova, Utrecht and Valiz, Amsterdam: BAK – basis voor actuele kunst, 2013.

[3] In the article, we discuss the concept and moment Post-Otherness as follows: "In that paradoxical moment, the figure of the 'Post-Other' emerges, a figure still bearing the signs of historical Othering while at the same time representing and experimenting with unknown futures beyond it. In the shadow of the dominant political imagination a cosmopolitanized reality of convivial struggles unfolds, speaking and acting against that imagery. The moment of the 'Post-Other,' however, is still in the state of emergence: it unfolds in the everyday practices of the 'unconscious' kind when, e.g., the anonymity of urban life allows or infinite examples of everyday cosmopolitan interactions. [...] Such practices are still waiting to be united and made visible."

[4] www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/01/the-ruthlessly-effective-rebranding-of-europes-new-far-right

This "geographical specification-ing" is in no way bad per se. The long list of, for example, "African shows" or "Arab world shows"[5] around the world did indeed do a great deal in presenting to the world what an African or Arab contemporary could be. That said and that done, one must now take stance to ask: what does it mean to put together an "Africa exhibition" or an "Arab exhibition" today, as we see in the New Museum, MMK Frankfurt, BOZAR Brussels, Fondation LV and many other museums in the West? What does it mean to make geography the subject matter rather than some other conceptual or philosophical discourses of relevance? What about issues of representation if one really wishes to make a geographical exhibition, i.e. how would one represent the 54 African countries, thousands of African languages, and communities within such an exhibition? These issues necessitate re-questioning and reconsidering.

But what prompts this reflection now are the following suspicions:

While the "geographical specification-ing" might be well-intentioned, one can't avoid thinking of the fact that the occasional presentation of an Africa, Arab, Asia or similar shows is another, and for that matter, a reinforced act of "Othering." This suspicion is brought about by the fact that institutions tend to content themselves with the fact that they have done an "Africa show" and therefore do not necessarily need to include other artists of African origin in their regular program. Such "geographical specification-ing" projects then tend to become a compensation for a lack of proper engagement with issues of diversity at the level of program, personel and public, and also tend to thrust the "Other" they construct into the "Savage slot," as Michel-Rolph Trouillot would put it.

Additionally, there is something about the rhetoric in which such "geographical specification-ing" projects are accommodated. With this I mean the rhetoric of "giving a voice to," "giving space to," "making visible," "taking care of," "making heard" the African, Asian, Arab or whoever in question. These phenomena which could be likened to a paternalisation and infantilisation strategies of course push us to think of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's petinent question "Can the Subaltern Speak?" But since Spivak, we have learnt that the issue at stake is not if the Subaltern can speak, but rather looking at the twist Seloua Luste Boulbina gave with her question "Can the non-subaltern hear and read?"[6] The crucial question is if these geo-social groups stereotypically put together in such shows, especially in Western museums, do actually wish to be given a voice, space or otherwise? And under whose terms? Don't they already have their spaces and voices? Again, the issue at stake is the agenda behind such rhetoric, and the fact that this rhetoric is indeed an important part in the process of constructing and cultivating "Otherness" within a bubble, i.e. unnecessarily and unwantedly. Which is to say that the exclusive mechanism in relation to such projects marks a difference between a constructed "norm" and the constructed "anomaly," which is the one off, space ship-like project that lands and then disappears.

It is equally important to point out the capitalist economic model behind such "geographical specification-ing" projects. The use of slogans, captions, simplifications is the epitome of neoliberal economic practice. This goes hand in hand with the concept of soft power, wherein culture is not only used for political aims, but also suits well as an entry into economic spheres. In the past years, we have heard from philosophers, economists and politicians alike that the future of the world, as we know it will be determined in Africa. Prompt was the reaction from the cultural sector, with projects like "African Futures," "Africa is the Future" and various sorts of "Afrofuturisms," as tags and labels well packaged for easy sales. It all becomes a commodity. The commodification of the "Other" and "Otherness."

> Where had they learned to converse and to dance? I couldn't converse or dance. Everybody

---

[5] For example *Contemporary African Art,* Studio International, London & New York, 1969. Camden Arts Centre, London, 1969, *African Contemporary Art,* The Gallery, Washington D.C, 1977, *Moderne Kunst aus Afrika im Rahmen des West-Berliner Festivals Horizonte Festival der Weltkulturen* (Nr. 1, 1979), *Art pour l'Afrique: Exposition internationale d'art contemporain.* Musée National des Arts Africains et Océaniens, Paris (08/06–25/07/1988), *Art contemporain arabe: collection du Musée du l'Institut du Monde Arabe,* Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 1988, *The Other Story: Afro-Asian Artists in Post-War Britain,* Hayward Gallery, London, 1989, *Contemporary Art from the Islamic World,* Barbican Concourse Gallery, London, *Africa Explores: 20th Century African Art,* Center for African Art, New York, *Fusion: West African Artists at the Venice Biennale,* Museum for African Art, New York, 1993, Seen/Unseen, Bluecoat Gallery, Liverpool, 1994, *Rencontres Africaines: Exposition d'Art Actuel, Institute du Monde Arabe,* Paris, 1994, *Seven Stories About Modern Art in Africa,* Flammarion, New York, 1995, *An Inside Story: African Art of Our Time,* The Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan Association of Art Museums, Tokyo, 1995, *New Visions: Recent Works by Six African Artists,* Zora Neale Hurston National Museum of Fine Arts, Eatonville, 1995, *Africana,* Sala 1, Roma & Adriano Parise Editore, Verona, 1996, *Africa by Africa: A Photographic View,* Barbican Centre, London, 1999, *Authentic/Ex-Centric, Forum For African Arts,* Ithaca (NY), 2001, *The Short Century: Independence and Liberation Movements in Africa 1945–1994,* edited by Okwui Enwezor, Prestel, Munich-New York, 2001. Curated by Okwui Enwezor, Villa Stuck, Munich (15/02–22/04/2001); Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin (18/05–22/07/2001); Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago (08/09–30/12/2001); P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center & The Museum of Modern Art, New York (10/02–05/05/2002), *Fault Lines: Contemporary African Art Shifting Landscapes,* inIVA, London, 2003, *Africa Remix,* Museum Kunst Palast, Düsseldorf (24/07-07/11/2004); Hayward Gallery, London (10/02–17/04/2005); Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris (25/05-15/08/2005); Mori Art Museum, Tokyo (02–05/2006)… just to mention a few.

[6] Seloua Luste Boulbina, *Being Inside and Outside Simultaneously. Exile, Literature, and the Postcolony: On Assia Djebar,* (Eurozine, 02.11.2007, www.eurozine.com/being-inside-and-outside-simultaneously)

> knew something I didn't know. The girls looked so good, the boys so handsome. I would be too terrified to even look at one of those girls, let alone be close to one. To look into her eyes or dance with her would be beyond me. And yet I know that what I saw wasn't as simple and good as it appeared. There was a price to be paid for it all, a general falsity, that could be easily believed, and could be the first step down a dead-end street.
>
> Charles Bukowski, *Ham on Rye,* 1982

But it's worth taking a few steps back to reflect. Otherness as a phenomenon seems to have always existed in many societies all over, and rendering "Other" as a process is said to be inherent in processes of identity formation of individuals and societies. In *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (1998), it is reiterated that "the existence of others is crucial in defining what is 'normal' and in locating one's own place in the world."[7] That is to say, for an individual or society to know or define them- or itself, it needs to define another individual or society with regards to what the former individual or society is not or doesn't wish to be. Often a time the "Other" then becomes that projection surface for all sorts of unwanted identitarian characteristics. That is then the thin line that separates the mere wish to "other" in order to find one's own identity, and the othering that is discriminatory and segregational. But if one is the other, then who is another?

Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin are fast to point out that it is often an interchangeable position of other and othering counterparts, where power probably determines who objectifies at what time. One is tempted to think that "geographical specification-ing" projects are then vehicles through which such power gradients are defined, and through which binaries of norm and anormaly, or self and other are defined. This of course applies to all sections to which majority and minority identities are defined and cultivated in relation to political, economic and social power and how they come to define race, cultural, gender and class identities, geographies, geopolitics and -economics.

From a feminist discourse and practice vantage point, Cherríe Moraga pointed out in La Güera that "what the oppressor often succeeds in doing is simply *externalizing* his fears, projecting them into the bodies of women, Asians, gays, disabled folks, whoever seems most 'other.'"[8] Without wanting to equate the "otherer," i.e. the one enjoying the privilege of making another "other," with the oppressor, Moraga's argument holds ground with the tendency of the "otherer" externalizing and projecting his/her fears on another in the enactment of othering. Moraga proceeds with an expatiation on the phenomenon:

> "But it is not really difference the oppressor fears so much as similarity. He fears he will discover in himself the same aches, the same longings as those of the people he has shitted on. He fears the immobilization threatened by his own incipient guilt. He fears he will have to change his life once he has seen himself in the bodies of the people he has called different. He fears the hatred, anger, and vengeance of those he has hurt."[9]

Taking this into consideration, what could "Dis-Othering" possibly imply?

Maybe firstly, dis-othering starts with the recognition of the acts and processes of othering. With the revelation of the undercurrents that feed, justify, enable and maintain acts and processes of othering. It is in and upon this awareness and consciousness of and towards these acts and processes of othering that one might be able to build resistance and protect oneself both from being othered and from the urge to other. Which is to say, it is in this recognition of the mechanism or technology of othering that a circumventing of the embodiments of both noun and verb, the othered and othering, respectively, can be achieved.

Secondly, dis-othering could imply any effort to resist the internalization of those constructs that are said to make one that "other." The tendency is to see oneself through the prism of the constructor of otherness or the oppressor, which is to say that faced with the violence of continuous belittling or jammed in that space of the savage slot in which one has been thrusted, the psyche of the "othered" forces that being to accept an existence within that marginal and liminal space.

Thirdly, in relation to Moraga and complementary to point two, dis-othering must be a self-break, a self-resistance by the "otherer" to externalize his/her fears, aches, and longings to being considered a possible recipient. Therefore, with "Dis-Othering" I wish to propose the phenomenon in which social identity building is not made by projecting on the so-called "Other," but rather a projection towards the self. A self-reflection. A boomerang. That is to say instead of looking for or deflecting one's faults, fantasies, angst on some other, one could embody them and live them. It is about acknowledging and embodying the plethora of variables that make us be.

Fourthly, dis-othering has to do with the realization or the putting in practice of what bell hooks calls "The Oppositional Gaze" (1992), which is to say the possibility of interrogating the gaze of the "otherer," but also the importance of looking back at and against the “otherer,” and looking at one another in that space of the “othered.”

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[7] Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Key Concepts in Post-Colonial Studies* (Psychology Press, 1998, p. 6).

[8] Cherríe Moraga. „La Güera", in *This Bridge Called My Back,* edited by Cherríe Moraga and Gloria E. Anzaldúa, (Persephone Press, 1981, p.27)

[9] Ibid.

Fifthly, dis-othering must be a deeply non-capitalist, non-exploitative and non-profit oriented act, wherein the principle of “what goes round, comes around” reigns. This is to say that if geopolitical, geo-economic and neoliberal capitalist economic goals of “profit, come what may” are catalysts to acts and processes of othering, then dis-othering must mean a negation and exemption from relations based on such principles.

Sixthly, dis-othering must mean getting out of the cul-de-sac of power relations as the basis of being in the world. Dis-othering is a call for an exploration of the cosmic vastness of the imagination of new futures, identities, ways of being, and ways of living together in the world based on and not despite our differences, but because of the importance and richness of our differences. Dis-othering is a pledge for a re-imagination, as much as a dismantling of cartographies of power, and a re-invention of geographies. Dis-othering is a re-caliberation of human and non-human, spacial and social relations independent of the given powers, but based on an interdependency of all – animate and inanimate – that co-habit this world.

Seventhly, dis-othering is the practicing of what Sara Ahmed calls the “feminist killjoy,” which is to say the act of resisting the joy or taking part in the joy of laughing at or mocking or belittling or denigrating or othering someone. A refusal to accept the comfort of societal status quos in relation to misogyny, patriarchy, racism, classism and genderism. Dis-othering will have to mean speaking up, pointing out, calling out inequities, as much as proposing alternative ways of being in and perceiving a world of justice and justness.

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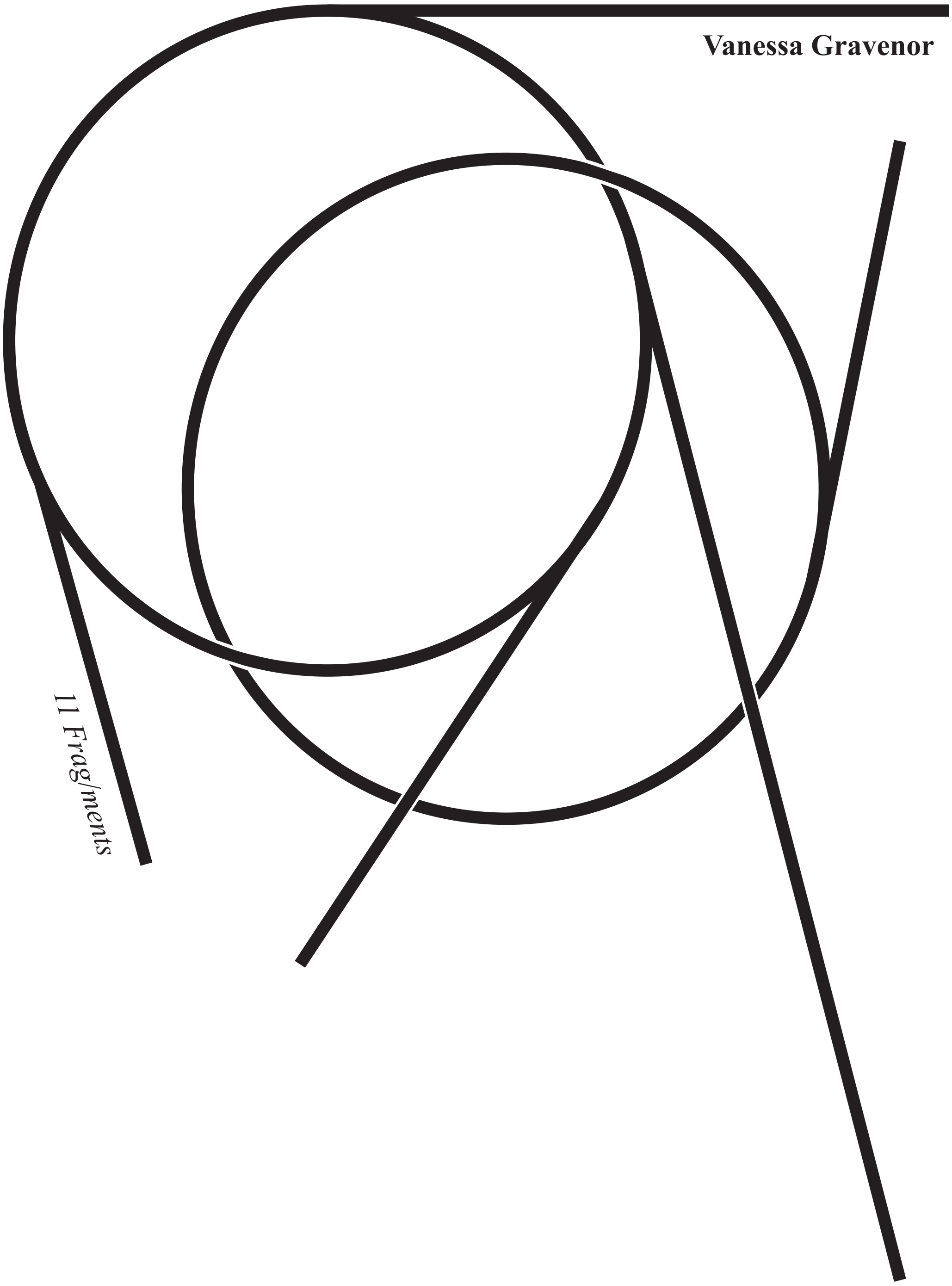

**Vanessa Gravenor**

# *11 Frag/ments*

**Vanessa Gravenor** is a writer and artist based in Berlin. Her criticism has appeared frequently in ArtSlant, Sleek Magazine, Selections, and Bad at Sports. She held a DAAD fellowship for the 2015/16 year where she researched histories of biopolitics and trauma, using video and post-digital aesthetics to compact these narratives.

*11 Frag/ments* is part of Vanessa Gravenor’s ongoing research on the notion of trauma.

## ***11 Frag/ments***

Intro:

In his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, Benjamin wrote that not even the dead will be safe from the reign of barbarism–that is that histories will not be spared in the overhaul of fascism. How does the past continually feed the present? How are narratives of proxy wars in the Middle East disconnected and erased from today's emergences of Islamic extremism in Europe? Today this translates to a strange facsimile: the dead are being armed to fight in the war that naturalizes violence in order to obfuscate pasts, systemic economic violence, and thus inevitably accelerating profits for the weapons industry. How do we keep this army of zombies at bay, who have risen up not by choice, but because they have been called to fight in a war that instrumentalizes terror? Untangling this knot leads oneself into a quagmire: one will soon find bodies doubling as well as territories mirroring. A tight tangle. A mask.

1.

The War on Terror is a phrase often spoken with a smile. On a rhetorical level, most do not know what it means. It produces a duplicity: a fiction that is meant to blind. Nearly 20 years after Bush II's wars in Iraq and following Obama's 2008 'Year of the Drone' in Pakistan [preceded by Clinton and Bush I's own rhetoric of terror and rogue states], the Trump administration has decided on a simple alternative: we will posthumously and immediately arm the dead corpses who were victims of mass shootings in the West. This suggestion was uttered with other grins for the second time on April 26th, 2019.[1] At the yearly National Rifle Association (NRA) rally in Indianapolis, Trump invoked the Paris 2015 attacks and claimed: had one victim or bystander been armed, the attacks would have been prevented. Last year, Trump made the same comments at the NRA convention in Dallas, Texas, which led former French President Francois Hollande to condemn his statements.[2] This barb is designed to infer two things: that terrorism and mass shootings are caused by the lack of guns in public space, and the naiveté of a (not-so) leftist Europe, whose laws restrict the distribution of guns. Trump's statements are not true, and it was the negligence and lack of strict gun laws in the EU which made it possible for the guns to be brought to Paris in the first place. Like the logic of the War on Terror, the statements are believed because they are based on a particular fiction. 20 years later, the violence of the phrase beats on.

2.

I first heard Trump's deployment of the "November 13th Paris Attacks" during a campaign speech in 2015, while I was on the couch recovering from a gunshot wound from that event. I switched the channel. I think it was a flippant line, "Something happened called Paris", but to avoid a PTSD trigger I quickly changed the channel and checked my pain killer regimen, which at the time was a carefully coordinated motley including an antibiotic IV drip. I suffered from acute Post Traumatic Stress Disorder parallel to Trump's campaign, and my daily routine consisted of walking a couple of blocks to Lake Michigan, before getting into bed to recover from the anxiety produced from this brief dalliance with public space. I avoided news covering the attacks, as advised by medical professionals. In November and December 2015, that meant all news. I filtered social media and email to avoid the strange exoticization of my trauma, which appeared as uncomfortable apologies and condolences – as if being shot but not killed rendered me undead. But all my filtering couldn't deny the endless instrumentalization, transforming the site of my traumatic memory into a battlefield for the NRA.

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[1] https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2019/04/trump-re-enacts-paris-terrorist-attacks-nra

[2] https://edition.cnn.com/2018/05/05/politics/trump-nra-speech-angers-french/index.html

One can form elaborate filter mechanisms to create an illusion of safety. However, I was unable ignore these repeated invocations to Paris in the past years. A similar logic – if not the exact phase – has been applied to school mass shootings in the United States, even though the gunmen are often white male Americans.[3] It doesn't matter if the gunmen are tied to ISIS or white supremacy, the narratives that emerge are the same – Islamphobia and warmongering – which suit conservative governments elected through the creation of a common enemy. What lurks behind President Trump's statement is a proposition for a society of pre-, post-, and present- Traumatic Stress Disorder, where public space is militarized. In this brutal vision, violence is not only normalized, but also accelerated for rapid consumption in order to be mined with adds and likes. The state of exception is taken as a de facto operating mantra, with terror used in order to construct and arm the fortress of the state. Yet, in the tenure of the long and far-reaching War on Terror, this tactic stretches back in time, so that the feedback loop begins to resemble a boomerang or even a cyclone.

### 3.

I was shot at the Belle Equipe in Paris on November 13th, 2015 at roughly 9:35pm. This was later categorized as a terrorist attack, and resulted in some 130 casualties and 413 injured individuals, among whom I was counted. President Trump recounts the scene of the crime as if it was a spaghetti Western, which inevitably reflects the Hollywood, cinematic vision of gun violence where two men stand in a face-off and a bullet can be returned with a counter-bullet. Being a victim of these attacks, I can only confirm the actual scene was anything but.

To advocate for a social normalization of arms is to speak from a place of non-injury. This is true not only physically, but also mentally, because repeated violence in public space causes the memories of violence to return ad infinitum. From my wound that stretched about five inches from entry to exit, a large segment of my flesh hung open, which because of the nature of the injury was left as an open wound that closed over the course of five months. It was through pain and injury that I learned about the design of the machines that hit me, and about the bullet – a large piece of metal two inches long. This caused me to conclude that there was never a time that I was non-injured, as the injury and wound wrote itself on my past and present.

The bravado of President Trump's statements indicate that he has never been in such a mass shooting. If he was, he would understand the hyper-vigilant anxiety inflicted on the brain in the period post. Like the sound of a delivery truck mimicking a bomb when dropping a package, or mistaking the sound of children releasing firecrackers as a gun. Or the deep depression that affected every aspect of life for years after. While many NRA supporters have served in the army, they assert that all public space is a war zone – or should be armed and defended as one. What this logic actually communicates is: the domestic setting is a war zone. All violence is permissible.

### 4.

In Trump's recounting of the scene, he sets up the attacks as though they were a system of coordinated strikes where victims were selected or lined up in a row. But there was no moment of recognition or slow motion movement between pre-attack and attack – or rather, this moment went missing. Knowing individuals who were in an adjacent cafe directly behind the shooters position, all had the same movements: duck, hide, play dead. Had one of these civilians been armed, would they have been able to send one bullet flying to kill all three assailants who had automatics? And if this person failed, would the assailants have then turned to fire at them? Then what? Or does the camera not make it this far in Trump's version of events? There's a reason for this: when assault rifles or defensive weapons are distributed in publics – or even within the police – violence is not contained but becomes senseless and reckless.

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[3] https://globalnews.ca/news/4622175/don-lemon-white-men-terror-threat

In a negligent police shooting reported in *The Dawn* by the mother of the deceased, a ricochet bullet that was aimed for a mugger but killed a young 10-year old girl in Karachi, Pakistan at a busy intersection. This was not an ordinary bullet, but a bullet fired from an AK-47. Why was a policeman firing an AK-47 in broad daylight in a civilian zone? Because of the abundance of assault rifles provided by powers like the US and Saudi Arabia, leftovers from the 80s Afghan war.[4]

Such antidotes reverberate through me because of the night of November 13th. I was also shot by a ricochet bullet, from an AK-47 procured from the Balkans. A study by *Der Spiegel* shows that the exact weapon make was the Servian Zastava M70, which was modeled off the Soviet AKM rifle and was a standard issue in the Yugoslav People's Army in the 1970's.[5] It likely made its way to Paris from Slovakia through Vienna. In this article, *Der Spiegel* explains that the reason it was possible to transport it to Paris was not because of the nefarious and well connected rings of the Islamic State, but because of the EU's negligent arms regulations, which permit the legal ownership of decommissioned rifles. Many of these guns have come into the EU by way of Slovakia, which alerted the EU in 2013 that these modified decoy weapons were rapidly being transformed into deadly weapons. In 2014, as the article notes, alarm or acoustic weapons – which are described by the European Commission as "an active weapon transformed to only shoot blank, for example for use in theatre or cinema"[6] – were still being left out of the 2014 Firearm Directive.

5.

*If I only had an AK.*

Personally, the damages from hearing, witnessing, and being a recipient of mass violence would not have been acquiesced even if I could have stood up from where I was lying, armed with an AK-47, to shoot all three of the assailants, who were notably all three wearing suicide vests, which could have been detonated and, in that case, would have surely killed me. Besides the very simple practical reasons of having no military training or the simple laws of physics that prevents bending bullets that are being catapulted towards you, it would be impossible to prevent the massacre because the launching point of the bullets were not founded in that night.

Post-colonial scholars of the negritude movement such as Aimé Cessaire and Frantz Fanon have written that colonial violence will find a way of returning, not in a straight line, but in a boomerang. For the past years I have meditated a lot on this statement and its corresponding relationship to these contemporary origins of violence. In search of a launching point, it would be logical to say that the violence of the Paris attacks was first fired by the French in their Colony of Algeria. And yet this simplification of the line of fire would be carrying a falsehood that its feedback loop can be contained to a single binary of victim/oppressor or nation/colony – breaking with the statement that the path of colonial violence is curved and mutated. This is not to say that the domestic or national issues within France did not condition the events of Friday, November 13, 2015. These facts are undeniable – and should be read against Paris' not so past police violence in 2005 where two teenagers were killed in the neighborhood of St. Denis while evading police interrogation, which caused country wide protests,[7] or the March 2015 verdict that rendered these policemen blameless.[8] The connection to colonialism is also made all the more apparent through the facts that the majority of the "assailants" in the attacks of November 13 were French or Belgian citizens of Algerian or Moroccan descent. So on one hand, the attacks get framed through the evil of immigration [aka racism] yet on the other, the history of French colonialism in Algeria and Morocco conveniently goes missing from the mainstream press.

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[4] Umur, Beenish, "How the system failed us" in The Dawn. September 16, 2018 https://www.dawn.com/news/1433274/how-the-system-failed-us

[5] Stefan Candea, Jürgen Dahlkamp, Jörg Schmitt, Andreas Ulrich and Wolf Wiedmann-Schmid http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/following-the-path-of-the-paris-terror-weapons-a-108 3461.html

[6] http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-4465_en.htm

[7] This was the subject of Haig Aivazian's lecture performance "World/antiworld: on seeing the double" as part

The narratives of the domestic or not so post-colonial grievances simply do not stack up in the media with the narrative of international terrorism, which blights out a more complicated reading and understanding of the assailants as both victims and perpetrators of violence. ISIL claimed the November 13 attack almost immediately. The planner of the attacks, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, who was killed in a police raid in St. Denis on the 18th of November, was a Belgian-Moroccan citizen who spent time in Syria fighting for the Islamic State and likewise had orchestrated a slew of other failed terrorist attacks in the previous months.

6.

In the hospital, two theories were given to me as an explanation for why I was shot. One nurse told me that the attacks were in retaliation to bombs France had dropped on ISIS, and the other theory was the gunmen were the second-generation of immigrants from North Africa who were sick of occupying the lowest economic positions – which is the structural violence of capitalism.[9] Therefore, the attack could also be seen as a revolt against capitalism.[10] Could it be that all of these things are true without negating the proceeding theory?

If my body was substituted for the body of the French nation while also being the body of a Western infidel, could it be that this deconstruction that gives way to duality and duplicity is the essential byproduct of the War on Terror for those on both sides of the line of fire? In a lecture performance titled "World/antiworld: on seeing the double" by artist Haig Aivazian, he suggests that the War on Terror produces a double vision. Though focusing primarily on the Stade de France suicide bombings, he also discussed at length the 2005 countrywide protests from the deaths of the two teenagers who died from electrocution when hiding in an electricity substation to avoid the police interrogations and questioning that happens regularly in this banlieue. He also placed the anti-colonial Algerian revolution in the year of 1955 on continuity with the previously mentioned dates and the bodies of protesters in Paris who were thrown into the Seine for showing solidarity. Aivazian's logic ultimately expands on the doubling of vision that is consistent in democracy's deployment of terror. In this war, as he says, the distinction between anti-colonial violence and terrorism does not matter. Rather than taking this statement to mean that anti-colonial violence and terrorism are equivalent, a more interesting reading would be that these activities could exist in parallel with one another.

The question of the double is also a question of distance, which in dialectical thinking brings one to the question of nearness. In his text "The Thing" Heidegger writes:

Nearness, it seems, cannot be encountered directly. We succeed in reaching it rather than to

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of the Mutterzunge program curated by Misal Adnan Yıldız

[8] https://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/22/opinion/a-lingering-injustice-in-france.html

[9] A longer development of this in Alain Badiou's book Notre mal vient de plus loin: Penser les tueries du 13 novembre 06.01.2016

[10] A more complex reading that connects Islamic extremism with a revolt against capitalism has been given by Samir Amin in his extensive work on Eurocentrism and the Muslim Brotherhood. See Amin, Samir, The People's Revolution ... 2010

> attending to what is near. Near to us are what we usually call things.[11]

In Ariella Azoulay's book "Death's Showcase", she calls on an early passage in the "Thing", where Heidegger writes about nearness and distance in terms of explosions of war:

> Man stares at what the explosion of the atom bomb could bring with it. He does not see that the atom bomb and its explosion are the mere final emission of what has long since taken place, has already happened.[12]

Heidegger's lecture, which is written after WWII, belatedly, talks about the appearance of violence as being a signal, a making visible of structural violence that is near – but whose very nearness traps it to thingness. Though this was not, this could be an antidote for the way racism works and can also be applied to the Paris 2015 attacks, but instead, the present remains blind, unable to see the estranged and mutated chronology, which can also be attributed to the tragedy of not seeing the double.

7.

In Adam Curtis' 2004 film, *The Power of Nightmares*, he details the co-current emergence of neo-conservatism that was spearheaded by followers of Leo Strauss and the emergence of what is today known as radical jihad developed by the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood member Sayyid Qutb who taught Ayman al-Zawahiri, the teacher of Osama Bin Laden. Locating the origins of the War on Terror in Reagan's Evil Empire, Curtis explains that the propaganda generated by the American state had one clear aim: to make myths, to re-establish the order of good and evil. Curtis' film narrates the two as interlinked histories, which of course in the media appear estranged. Political Islam, what Samir Amin calls the current form the Muslim Brotherhood takes, and he writes, has long been an ally to Western Imperialism:

> The collusion between the imperialist powers and political Islam is, of course, neither new nor particular to Egypt...Political Islam throughout the Muslim world is quite assuredly a strategic ally of the US and its NATO minority partners. Washington armed and financed the Taliban, who they called 'freedom fighters', in their war against the national/popular regime (termed communism) before during and after the Soviet intervention[13]

Amin reminds us that the origins of terrorism can be found through the United States' own shared history with it, rather than occurring in a vacuum.

Before the ultimate enemy was Islamic extremism christened as terrorism, the enemy was the Soviet Union, which was all in all an illusion of evil in many ways. It was an illusion, especially in the Afghani war, because it was already a crumbling corrupt state with no civil defense capacity, as Chomsky points to in his book Necessary Illusions. Instead the evil threat was propagandized as a mask for domestic control.[14] Chomsky famously writes that when the state has no consensus, it will create propaganda and myths to fabricate consent. This, he adds, is connected to military Keynesianism, where wars waged outside of the United States have the function of stimulating the domestic market. He writes:

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[11] Heidegger, Martin, "The Thing". In *Poetry, Language, Thought* tr. Hofstadter, New York: Harper & Row, 1971.

[12] Azoulay, Ariella. Death's Showcase: The Power of Image in Contemporary Democracy. Cambridge: MIT, 2001. 43.

[13] Amin, Samir, *The People's Spring: The Future of the Arab Revolution*, 2012, Oxford: Pambazuka Press, p. 28

[14] Chomsky, 185.

> In fact, throughout this period [The Cold War], the policies of military Keynesianism, justified in terms of the Soviet threat, have been instrumental in the growth of high technology industry and have served as a mechanism of state industrial management, once again in the early Reagan years, with accompanying inflammatory rhetoric about the “Evil Empire” that is “the focus of evil in our time” and the source of all problems in the world.[15]

As Chomsky notes, the illusion of the evil threat posed by the Soviet Union was a tactic to also accelerate the weapons industry – and one can corroborate this fact by looking at most wars in this time that were won by intelligent machines, notably the stinger missile introduced in the war in Afghanistan.

In light of President Trump’s statements and the fact that he propagates Islamophobia in the name of the victims of the Paris attacks in November 2015, it is painfully clear how this framing of evil is directly operable in the context of the NRA and wars industries. The complexity of the attacks is once again washed into a simple binary of the West vs. East or the West vs. Islam, so much so that the binary is so strong the sides and the various aims start to resemble one another.

Trump revives the Paris attacks again and again as if he is arming dead corpses to both create and wipe out an enemy. And like other wars that are undeclared, long, and persisting, not even the dead are safe, as Oxana Timofeeva’s reminds us by quoting Benjamin in her series of articles “Now is Night.”[16] She explains that the appearance of Russian corpses shipped back from Ukraine called Cargo 200 [Cargo 200 is the code word for referring to military casualties in the Soviet military] is the evidence of the only reliable physical proof of war.[17]

What then does the appearance of a Servian Zastava M70 in Paris signal or the 19 bodies that became corpses instantly at the Belle Equipe: *a war*, or *an entanglement of wars*? But guns are not bodies: they do not carry the culture in which they were embedded in and created for. Or do they?

8.

Ironically – or not so ironically – logos bearing the insignia of one country today are the only incriminating evidence that implicates a country in undeclared wars waged abroad. Like the evidence of Cargo 200 that makes visible the undeclared war in the Ukraine, can the findings of arms brokered and sold by one country to another at war be constituted as “reliable physical proof of war”? If weapons bearing insignia become implicated morally in war, what type of moral implication does this carry to the fabricator?

As described by Peter Galison,[18] Norbert Wiener (a famous US American cybernetics engineer who affected the outcome of WWII) himself regretted his contributions to cybernetics and predictive machines after the atom bomb was dropped over Hiroshima – though he himself did not issue the bomb, he recognized his role in the military industrial complex. And consistent with this logic, the victims of weaponry also recognize the producer and arms manufacturer as a key figure in their traumatic experiences.

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[15] Chomsky, Noam. Necessary Illusions: Thought Control in Democratic Societies. Boston, South End Press: 1989 p. 185

[16] Timofeeva, Oxana, “Now is Night”, in e-flux, Journal #91, https://www.e-flux.com/journal/91/198518/now-is-night/

[17] Ibid.

[18] In Peter Galison’s The Ontology of the Enemy: Norbert Wiener and the Cybernetic Vision. Critical Inquiry, Vol. 21, No. 1. (Autumn, 1994), pp. 228-266.

After I was shot, it took two months to understand exactly how I was shot. Moreover, after the attacks, the image of that bullet remained in my head, so much so that I researched its inventor Mikhail Kalashnikov and came across a similar statement as Norbert Wiener's. Mikhail Kalashnikov regretted that his invention was used for evil but ultimately decided it was the humans behind the machine that controlled what evil was to be deployed. Guns manufacturers usually make a similar statement, and American laws grant immunity to the manufacturer, which ultimately prevents cybernetics from being implicated. The arms race answers this ethical problem with a predictable conclusion: simply remove or expand the distance between the human and the machine and then there is no culpability.

9.

As the nine families from the Sandy Hook, Newtown, Connecticut mass shooting know after they sued the gun manufacture companies, such Remington Arms, maker of the Bushmaster AR-15 rifle that was specifically used in the attack, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act shields gun manufacturers from legal repercussions after the criminal use of their manufactured arms.[19] This principle of distribution whereby the point of origin of violence is absolved of any claim in the actual act of violence can be compared to the principle of the 'gray arms market', an elaborate series of imports and exports funneled through intermediaries intended to disguise the point of a weapon's origin. This ruse is something the new NRA president Oliver North is well acquainted with.

Oliver North, who will serve as the new NRA president, was a principal figure in the Iran-Contra scandal – the notorious arms for hostage deal in the 80s that brokered arms for the dual aim to aid the Contras against the military government of the Sandinistas who had come to power in Nicaragua after a coup, ousting an American backed government. Officially, the deal was brokered so that the Iranians would help free American hostages taken in Lebanon by Hezbollah. North was in charge of the Contra operation from the beginning of the 80s, as noted by historian Malcolm Byrne.[20] This war was made possible by offshore financial accounts, drug lord rebels, and American sponsored terrorism.[21] North set up an elaborate proxy infrastructure whereby weaponry was coming from Eastern Europe, but most notably from Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) weapons seized in Lebanon.[22] However, as Byrne aptly puts it, the deal was preceded by Iran's own sudden need for arms for their own senseless war with Iraq.

Though there were many leaks to the public during the covert war in Nicaragua, the story came tumbling down when an Enterprise C-123 aircraft was shot down when flying over Nicaragua territory while making an arms drop of 70 AK-47s and 100,000 rounds of ammunition, rocket grenades, and other supplies to the contras. On National Television on November the 13th 1986, in an address to the Nation, US President Reagan looks into the camera and denies that arms were brokered for hostages in the deal known as Iran-Contra, while making no mention to the diversion of funds to the Contras. He claims simply the spare parts were a mere signal to the Iranians of good faith.

And what is a signal anyways? A sign that an invisible war is being waged. A sign that cargo filled with arms are being deployed or that this cargo is being returned with corpses?

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[19] https://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/10/14/497989377/judge-dismisses-newtown-fa milies-lawsuit-against-ar-15-style-gun-maker

[20] Byrne, Malcolm, Iran Contra: Reagan's Scandal and the Unchecked Abuse of Presidential Power, Lawrence: UP Kansas, 2014.

[21] Chomsky.

[22] Both Noam Chomsky and Malcolm Byrne draw attention to this fact.

### 10.

It took five months for my wound to close. During the second week in the hospital, I asked for a complete picture of my wound to be taken so I could look at it. As a gun-shot wound victim, I never expected how one's body could be violated not only by the bullet or the people who shot you, but all the personnel who handled your body: moving it in ways you couldn't because of lack of strength; probing and checking your organs while under anesthesia. The fear of the operation room became another site for nightmares.

At first the picture was denied. I think the doctor was offended by my request. But in the end, after deliberation, I was given it. A gash in flesh when held near but a ghastly mark in a landscape when held far away.

I don't know what happened to that picture, but I've been trying to configure another one for the past years.

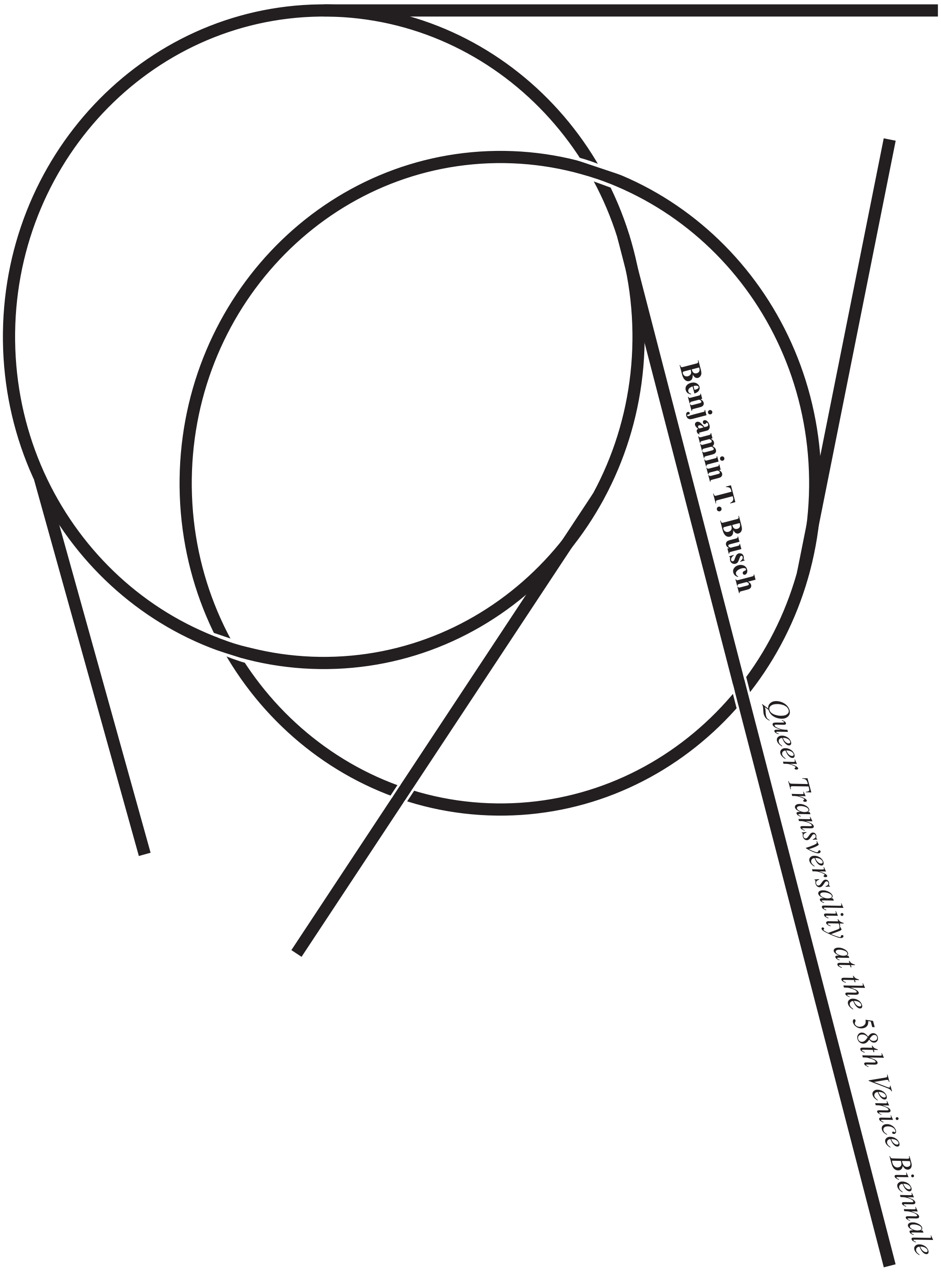
But the parts keep slipping and assembling themselves into other arrangements.

### 11.

Violence is often a signal of what has happened. The left-over abundance of arms and spare parts of war have a way of reassembling matters into new conflicts. The appearance of corpses freshly manufactured attest to this fact: that an asymmetrical hybrid battleground has reconfigured itself. This reconfiguring is predicated precisely on a myth of a lack: lack of guns, lack of a defense, and the end result bring destruction to a head. A gun that shoots blank always reverts to its original function, but shooting blank in this case can also mean making a statement like “something happened called Paris” or “had one of the victims of the Paris November 13 attacks been armed”. This conditional past tense, “would have been”, fires blank into the air, shooting something uncertain into the future that will likely materialize into a weapon of sorts. In this case, the violence of the phrase can skip many beats until it falls. An axe.

*Special thanks to Richard Pettifer and Hiba Ali for being readers and editors of the first drafts and to Hito Steyerl for encouraging me to write this in the first place.*

—Vanessa Gravenor



**Benjamin T. Busch**

# *Queer Transversality at the 58th Venice Biennale*

**Benjamin T. Busch** is an American visual artist and architect living in Berlin. Spanning art, architecture, curating, and writing, his work deals with the aesthetics/politics of space.

*Queer Transversality at the 58th Venice Biennale* is a review published by Berlin Art Link in 2019. Endnotes have been added.

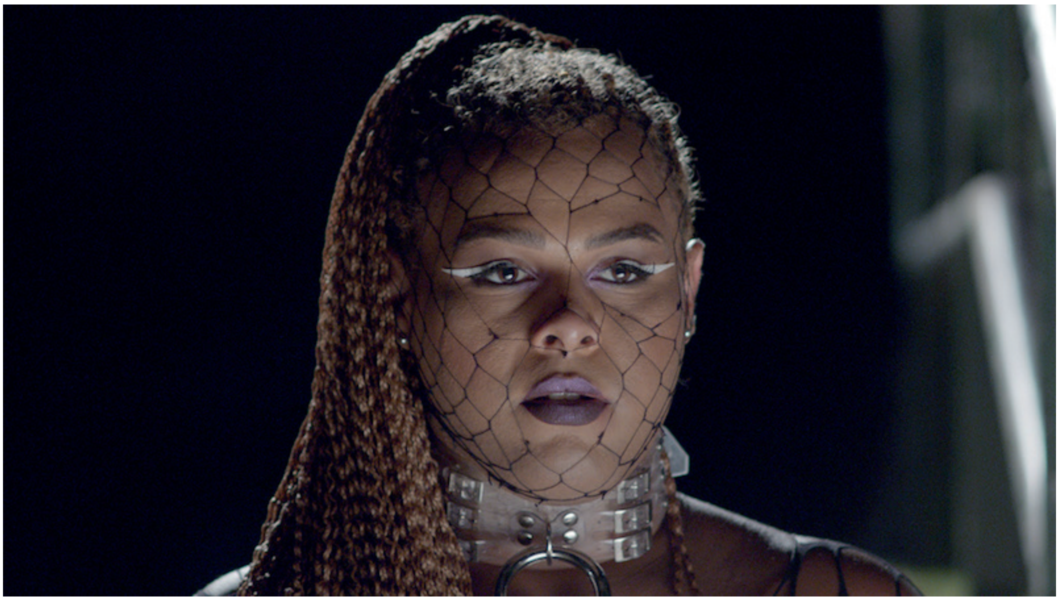
BERLINARTLINK
THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE

# Queer Transversality at the 58th Venice Biennale

Article by Benjamin Busch // June 03, 2019

How to trace nonbinary relations at the Venice Biennale, an aging institution burdened by spatial subdivision into national domains of representation? With a queer transversal approach.

Queer transversality is a model of collectivity that combines queer subjectivity with a device for mapping the potential of desire within groups. For Félix Guattari, “Transversality is a dimension that tries to overcome both the impasse of pure verticality and that of mere horizontality: it tends to be achieved when there is maximum communication among different levels and, above all, in different meanings.”[1] Group-subjects, according to Gilles Deleuze, “are defined by coefficients of transversality that ward off totalities and hierarchies. They are agents of enunciation, environments of desire, elements of institutional creation.”[2] Transversality depends on an acceptance of the risk of having to confront “the otherness of the other,”[3] of the multiplicity of desires espoused by groups outside one’s own.



Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca: ‘Swinguerra’, 2019, still, Pavilion of Brazil at the 58th Venice Biennale // Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia

Queerness implies a sensibility. Historically, queerness is linked to “Camp.” In ‘Notes on “Camp”’ Susan Sontag writes that Camp is a sensibility, not a hardened idea, and that “the essence of Camp is its love of the unnatural: of artifice and exaggeration.”[4] Neither moralistic high culture nor high art, “Camp is art that proposes itself seriously, but cannot be taken altogether seriously because it is ‘too much.’ […] The whole point of camp is to dethrone the serious.”[5] Camp confronts the normal as other, generating a perspective that accepts normality but also lays it bare.

Queer transversality can embody Camp, but the former is not necessarily defined by the latter. Contemporary queer expressions like drag, and particularly nonbinary drag, considered next to today’s more widespread genderqueer and transgender identities, challenge Sontag’s relegation of Camp to affluent societies “capable of experiencing the psychopathology of affluence.” An infrastructural sensibility, whatever its name, can draw relations between queer subjects across race, sex/gender, nationality and class. The trauma associated with queer experience, particularly that of adolescence, approaches something like a universal. Queer transversality accepts the risk of confronting the otherness of the natural and, as a mode of collectivity, unleashes queer desires.

Within this edition of the Venice Biennale as a whole, which comprises a curated international exhibition, the national pavilions, collateral events and a performance program, disparate queer facets combine to offer a multitude of transversal positions. Devised by Biennale curator Ralph Rugoff and Delfina Foundation director Aaron Cezar, a performance program during the early days of the 58th International Art Exhibition (to be supplemented with performances during the closing week) brought queer subjectivity and performativity to the fore. The curated performances, under the umbrella of the public program ‘Meetings on Art,’ unfolded on multiple stages, including several set up in the lush green Giardino delle Vergini, nestled behind the Arsenale.

boychild: ‘Untitled Hand Dance’, 2019, performance as part of ‘Meetings on Art’, 58th Venice Biennale, 2019 // Photo by Riccardo Banfi, Courtesy of Delfina Foundation and Arts Council England

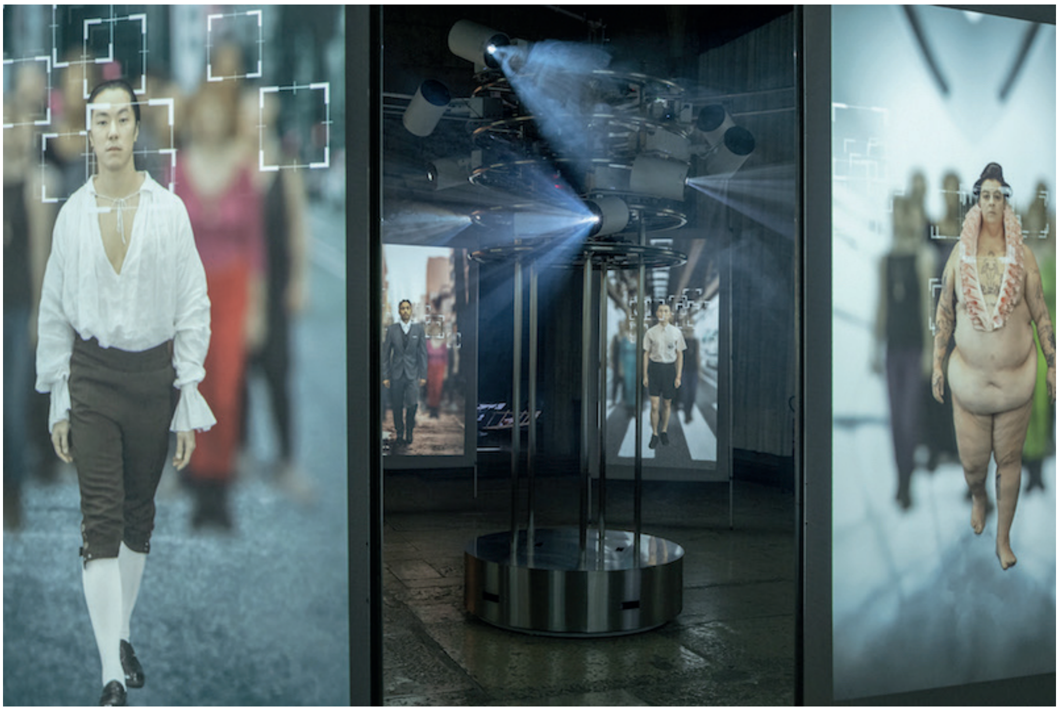
Under dappled sunlight, Victoria Sin presented their work ‘If I had the words to tell you we wouldn’t be here now’ (2019), featuring Matteo Gemolo on the traverso, a Baroque transverse flute chosen specifically for the site of Venice. Sin, who is nonbinary, performed using elements of drag—costume, makeup, lip-syncing—to convey an extreme state of feeling. In a monolog presented as a disembodied voice, Sin repeats the phrase: “Naming is an act of mastery, and I would hope to never do that to you.” The pronouns and names of people and places in her story, broadly about gender identity and migration, are replaced with musical flourishes, forming a narrative that demonstrates how language both gives shape to and shapes thought. Sin’s own refusal of gendered pronouns (using instead they/them) reflects a practice of radical care: by refusing gendered pronouns, they open a space of queer transversality that does not presuppose or demand gendered subjects. At times during the performance, Sin’s amplified voice goes on without them lip-syncing, creating a rupture in the illusion of speech, a double estrangement that paradoxically brings the audience closer to their message.

Comparatively, boychild’s performance ‘Untitled Hand Dance’ (2019) was a subtle and heavily nuanced study in the gendered performativity of gestures. On a humble stage surrounded by grassy mounds occupied by an array of reclining audience members, boychild, wearing a two-piece suit, performed, without a soundtrack, an assemblage of loaded, empty-handed gestures. She covered a range of gentle, minute movements up to territorializing expansions across the space of the stage. Casting one’s gaze from her body toward the multitude of bodies in the audience, the fourth wall melted into the soil. For a moment, a fragile collectivity emerged around a tender space of queer transversality.

Florence Peake and Eve Stainton: ‘Apparition Apparition’, 2019, performance part of Meetings on Art, 58th Venice Biennale, 2019 // Photo by Riccardo Banfi, Courtesy Delfina Foundation and Arts Council England

In the Teatro Piccolo Arsenale, Florence Peake and Eve Stainton presented ‘Apparition Apparition’ (2019), in which their intimate relationship serves as a way to discuss personal and political stakes. Entering the theater, one encountered two nude women perched on seats in its center, drawing on each other’s bodies, with the stage curtain drawn. One by one, the artists asked members of the audience if they would consent to drawing on their bodies, with most agreeing. In a second phase, the curtain opened up, revealing a surreal scenography accompanied by a surging abstract noise soundtrack. The artists adopted various gestural and sexual positions amid partial objects, becoming one.

Housed in the Palazzo delle Prigioni, which was a prison from the 16th century until 1922, is ‘3x3x6,’ a new exhibition by Shu Lea Cheang, organized by Taipei Fine Arts Museum, Taiwan. Departing from research beginning with Giacomo Casanova, imprisoned there in 1755, Cheang presented the stories of ten prisoners from across space and time, cultures and histories, in the format of synchronized video portraits—prisoners accused of gender or sexual dissidence, including Marquis de Sade and Michel Foucault, among other contemporary cases. Meanwhile a large staged surveillance apparatus monitored and transformed images of visitors, imprisoning them in the machine.



Shu Lea Cheang: ‘3X3X6’, mixed media installation // Courtesy of the artist and Taiwan in Venice 2019

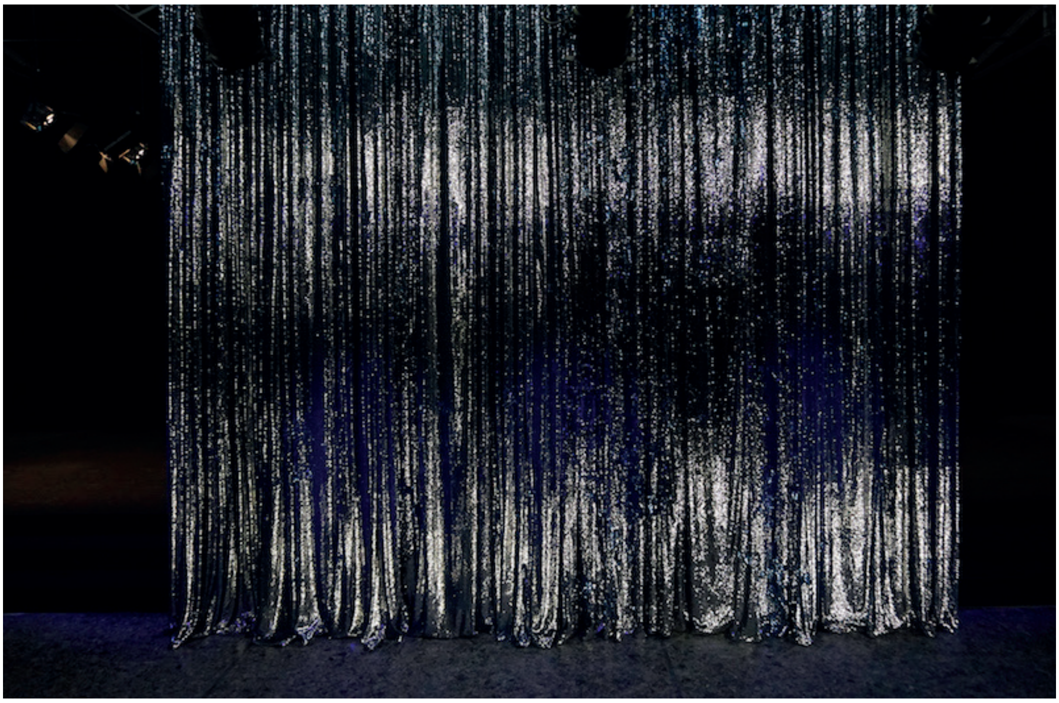
Curated by Paul B. Preciado, Cheang’s exhibition (and Peake and Stainton’s performance) can be read as works of queer postpornography. In his book ‘Testo Junkie’ (2008), Preciado writes that under today’s regime of “pharmacopornographic capitalism”—an extension of Foucault’s biopolitics in an era defined by pharmaceutical and pornographic consumption—postpornography is “a matter of inventing other […] forms of sexuality that extend beyond the narrow framework of the dominant pornographic representation and standardized sexual consumption."[6] People who have been "passive objects" of pornography become "subjects of representation." In so doing, they undermine the codes that make their bodies and sexual practices visible as pornographic products for consumption, which feeds into an ideology of "natural" gender and sexual relations.[7]

Among the national pavilions, Brazil and Switzerland, both in Giardini, offered two important contributions toward a transversal map of queer potentiality (while neither is explicitly postpornographic). The Brazil pavilion presented 'Swinguerra', a project by Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca, composed of a new film presented as a two-channel video installation alongside staged photographs of the film's protagonists—predominantly queer and nonbinary dancers of color. The film accompanies rehearsals of three dance groups: a swingueira group, a brega group, and a batidão do maloca group—a series of movements and phenomena in Brazilian culture. In choreographed group scenes and individual communicative vignettes, the protagonists switch gender roles, expressing a fluid "gender performativity." Throughout the film, the protagonists refrain from speaking: they communicate instead through movement; they move with booming music from the scene accompanied by arousing and provocative lyrics.

Bárbara Wagner and Benjamin de Burca: 'Swinguerra', 2019, still, Pavilion of Brazil at the 58th Venice Biennale // Courtesy of La Biennale di Venezia

Finally, the Swiss pavilion, with the new work 'Moving Backwards' by Pauline Boudry and Renate Lorenz, suggests "backward movement" (as opposed to outright political opposition) as a potential tool for alternative forms of resistance and action in the current moment threatened by regressive and reactionary forces. Taking the form of a video installation, accentuated by an animate, sparkling silver curtain, this work also eschews spoken dialog, instead using visual identity cues and gestures of movement, gender performativity and queer collectivity. A takeaway newspaper available upon exiting the pavilion, presented on a bar next to two wall works, contains a dozen letters from influential international figures in queer discourse, printed in Arabic, French and English. The artists suggest a reorientation toward practices like those of the Kurdish Women's Movement, bifurcated from the timeline of xenophobic authoritarianism.

These examples point to a future of queer art that is centered on the visual representation of subjectivities that have been hitherto deemed marginal, deviant, dissident, pathological. Important among these works is a de-emphasis on white, cis-male homosexuality, which has historically taken up a great deal of the "queer" space in artistic representation, compared to lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and genderqueer subjectivities. Rather than static works, time-based media and performance prevail, interrogating through choreographic practice the everyday choreography of bodies and spaces generally perceived to be natural. Queer transversality explodes the natural order through a recognition and celebration of the many sexual practices and gender expressions that stand at the foundation of its own reproduction.



Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz: 'Moving Backwards', 2019 (detail), Installation with film, curtain, stage, bar, publication and performances at 58th Venice Biennale, Swiss Pavilion // Courtesy of the Pavilion of Switzerland at the 58th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia

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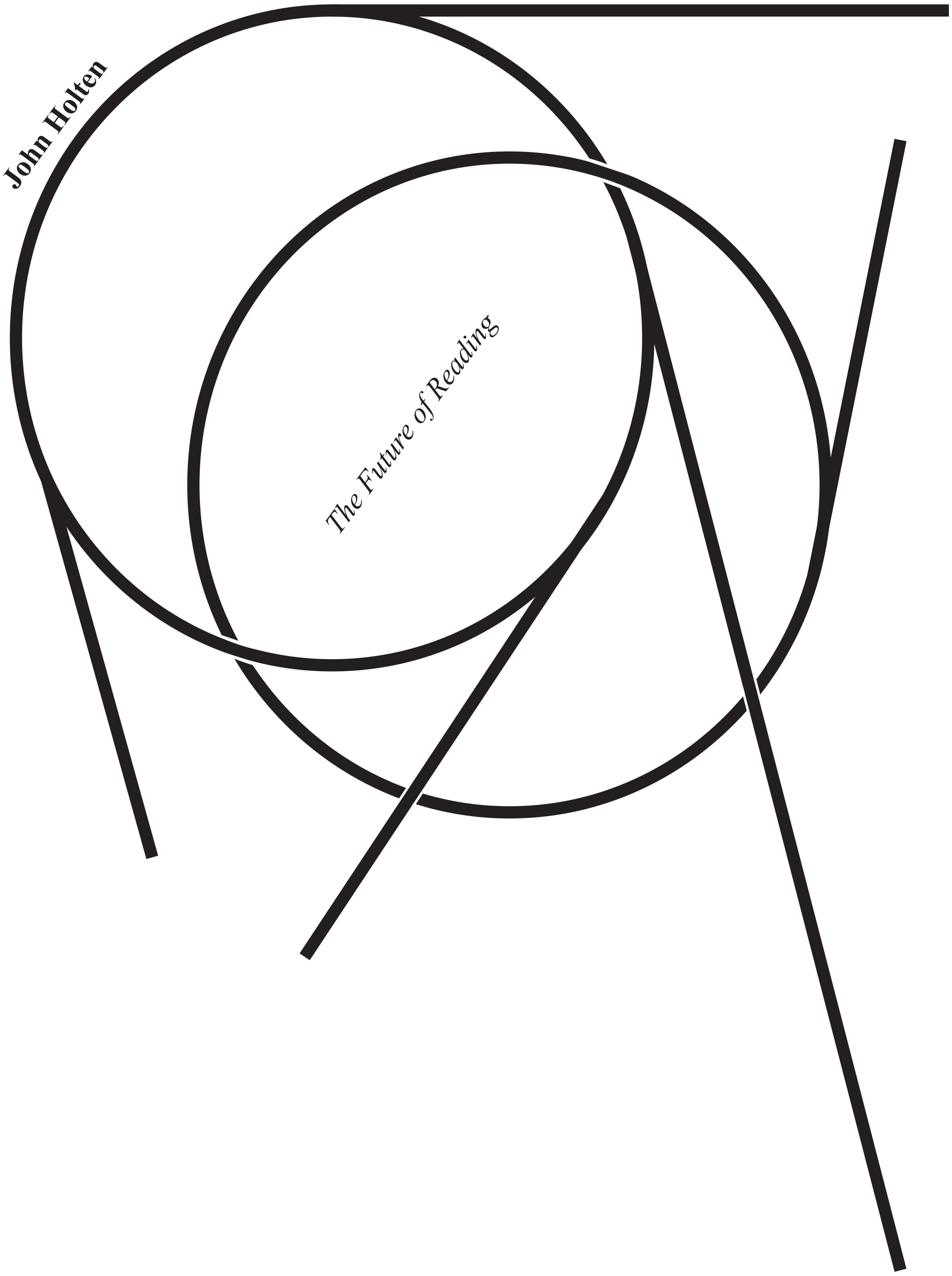
1 Félix Guattari, trans. Ames Hodges, *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews 1955–1971* (South Pasadena, CA: Semiotext(e), 2015), 113.
2 Ibid., 14.
3 Ibid., 120.
4 Susan Sontag, "Notes on 'Camp,'" in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1966): 275-292, 275.
5 Ibid., 284, 288.
6 Paul B. Preciado, trans. Bruce Benderson, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics in the Pharmacopornographic Era* (New York, NY: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2013 [2008]), 272.
7 Ibid., 273.



**John Holten**

# *The Future of Reading*

**John Holten**. Novelist and writer. Born 1984, Ireland, lives and works in Berlin, Germany. Novels: The Readymades (2009) and Oslo, Norway (2015). I am writing the backstory and lore for Seed, a MMO game by Klang Games. The Readymades will be published in Ireland by gorse editions in 2018, with an excerpt to be included in ‘The Irish Tradition’, edited by Rob Doyle (Dalkey Archive Press, 2018).

*The Future of Reading* was published online in 2016 by The Partisan Hotel.

# ‘The Future of Reading’

## John Holten

¶ *Reading Reality into Fiction*

When I think of the future of reading I think of the past, I think of Walter Benjamin or Peter Mandelsund. I think of book covers and how we were always told: don’t judge a book by its cover. But then came a time when books didn’t have covers; then came a time when books were nothing but covers; then came a time, Mallarmé’s time, when everything was in a book and the world itself, that yokel of metaphysics, was its cover. The years came and went, 2008, 2016, 2024. And still, here we are, obdurate, existing ever more. It is funny to think people thought the book was over. People also thought the Internet was over! It hasn’t died, I mean to say: neither books nor the Internet have died. Because the Internet is everywhere.[i] Books are one step even further because we read in our sleep and your image is read after you die. Have I said this yet: the world is between the covers of a book.

For my part, I have become Riba. The jovial, somewhat sad, publisher of Enrique Vila-Matas.[ii] Which is the same as saying I have become Vila-Matas for all the characters of Vila-Matas *are* Vila-Matas, they are the cover between him and the world. I say this thinking of how he explored the ways art could be brought to life, how he could outsmart the disorder of this mess we call life and run rings around Sophie Calle and read the story he wrote – reading and living are the same here – through gestures and speech-acts.[iii] But of course, that’s the worst thing one can do when reading: get the author confused with their creations.

¶ *Union Square Café*

The great age of literary publishing is over and it was declared over in the toilet of Union Square Café sometime during what the Americans call the

Festive Season in the year 2006, uttered wordlessly by a publisher that shall go unnamed here – and besides someone I've never even met – but who had a lot to lose in the war being waged against author, agent, Bezos, bookseller – and reader. 'It's over' he mouthed as he stared at his reflection, his eyes quietly aflutter, cocaine rushing through his bloodstream, a martini, perhaps his last for a while, slowly gathering moisture along the rim of the glass, awaiting him at the bar. A reader of dry martinis, a good alcoholic. Like Riba. And like me? I am other. The good reader must have a good memory, at least a good selective memory and so I have cultivated mine through abstinence and gingko biloba.

This was over twenty years ago lest we forget and the older one gets the harder it is to rely on memory. How old I've gotten too! A surprise certainly, while I may not have the trouble of Riba or his inventor Vila-Matas, I've imbibed my fair share of wines it is true. Then all those days of lethargy, how they added up to become one large what-could-have-been, the saddest words a man could ever utter, or so said the wise Boethius. So my unpublished library remains open to interpretation – all those books I could have written, could have edited, could have read. This is what I think when I think of Benjamin and his 'interpreters of fate', not only have I collected, I have read. It takes a poet to articulate this accurately:

*I am unpacking my library, yes I am. No books this time, though. Just their idea, its progress. Each thought out of its box, like an email out of the other (not like that at all). Or a book: its memory. All six sides of it. Like an object, like some furniture, or what it furnishes us with: desire. That arrangement of flowers. That infinity pool of the computer.*

*The desire of a library; the desire for a library: two different things. Both, however, can lead one to the cerulean literary harbours where swim the fringe forms, the booklike creations, their bookish creators, schools of floral fish like fringe, like kelp waving in the water. Hey. Watch them float past, their lucid, fluid, petal-like paces through the blue. (Stop thinking about screens, about swiping, scanning, stroking; think about water, its literature.) In these literary port cities, with their transgressive profiles of water, so swims past these fluorescent, transgressive schools: libraries without books, literature without writing, writing without text, collecting without reading, publishing without literature, books without book-like form. Luminescent, literary fringe. No dust.'* [iv]

### ¶ *Future Fringe*

And this is where we got to, this dust free future where reading shares the stage with the implied literary imagination of projection, forecasting, anticipation – all bred from a sense memory of what reality may be: we live the life we've written for ourselves. Writing without text. Books without book-like form. I think I once tried to write this text, many years ago, in the face of the deep ill ease we all felt then, not of the break up of the politic order or the demise of the ecological habitats we've ruined for our descendants, but for the ability to read works of art as they had been handed down to us, as one medium was replaced by another, we couldn't recognize the experience of reading the world in a shared way that gave pleasure to our moral sense of place within it. We transgressed our limits of attention, and felt desperately at fault for doing so.

### ¶ *The Map and the Territory*

Plato hated that the written word could take precedence over oral communication – only in speech encounters could we be sure that our audience (our reader?) could properly receive our message.[v] But then of course communication itself took precedence over the written word. The map collapsed into the territory, we were told reality itself was fading away. The land became a text. And in that time when we joked as we Facetimed for the first time, or entered a café in Manhattan using Google street view, the text was magic, it was technology: language was an event properly told, not a medium, books refound what they had always the potential to be: physical spaces removed and floating heavily in the stream of ethereal information, weighed down with hallmarks, notchsticks, tatty pages and broken spines, a reassuring weight in the reader's hands.

### ¶ *The Post-Novel*

Was the literary novel killed by the wording in a sub-prime mortgage contract? The intricacies of a bank bailout in any one country that affected the lives of countless others in some other neighbouring country? Was it killed by the unknown desperation that forced a mother and father to uproot their children and walk, tramp, run, swim across borders to avoid trauma, danger, death? Was it killed by the image and videos of police breaking up a teenage pool party, racially profiling the attendees before brutally assaulting a terrified teenage girl in her bikini and pinning her to the ground as if she, and she alone, threatened the world order? The exact date is hard to say (gosh, how sad I am right now) the exact date is impossible to say because it is the date when reading became hard to do in the face of the conspiracy of attention spread over the requisite amounts of time needed to unfurl these disgustingly complex narratives. History, long form, LOL Plato.

When I was growing up during the impressionable age books came at me haphazardly and yet I gave them unwarranted attention and read them right the way through, and what is more, I became them for the duration of reading them. A slow becoming, character formation in the time it took me to grow the strength needed to get through the pages. I wish there were a name for this, a word to describe the process.

### ¶ *The Decline and Fall of an Industry Standard*

I remember meeting Nate Forbes for the first time. He wanted to talk about the end of journalism and we got pretty drunk while he outlined the closures of several newspapers, including *The Independent*, where he first started out. I think it's safe to say that Forbes was somewhat obsessed about it and I guess I told him one or two things about how publishing, as it operated in the past, was also undergoing a serious transformation, something that didn't threaten it terminally, but more that it had the potential to survive without the publisher. Journalism, he added, without the journalist, is mere opinion.

I always thought Nate would never write a book – but when it did it astounded me. I read it in one sitting through the night. I had never even heard of Eduardo Rósze Flores! Sadly I never found out exactly why he chose me to publish the book. At least not the real reason. He said it was because I knew that my profession was in decline, much like his was, something I didn't bother to contradict but quietly now wish I had. He also said he admired how we called ourselves a European publishing house.

But then came *A Burning Atlas*. Yeah, Forbes didn't like this but that doesn't matter, we had been building up to this book for years. I can see why some people are upset by the idea of a non-human poetry, but I'm also surprised: the lengthy debates that surrounded English as a second language literature had already changed how people saw writing – and language – and how in the new age of internationalized cultural agency was bred from a shared platform, an online platform we were all busy making every day.

This brings me to think of my first meeting with Djordje Bjojic and how different he was to an author like Nate Forbes: sad and truculent, I met Bojic sometime just before dawn in a Paris of faded dreams. This was beyond post-modern times, it was non-time somehow and the man was about to go and die. But he died knowing that the world was ending, and of course he was right. That's the strangest thing about the future of reading: it's most important aspect is our disability to read our own habitats. But that's what we get for hubris.

### ¶ *If Countries were People*

Attention deficit therapy and concentrated reading groups shouldn't surprise us: the heated conversation around reading today is no less intense than every generation has enjoyed with each new experience of mapping the territory. It’s our minds that shape the reality our devices transmit to us, this is what we shouldn’t forget and books and reading books are too elegant to let anybody forget that.

### ¶ *What was it I was Reading?*

Publishing, like collecting books in a library, like choosing books to read, reading books to conclusion(s), is, as Roberto Calasso so assiduously put it, an art in itself and the publisher’s backlist is a form unto itself, indeed a literary work that is an interlinked chain which is a ‘self-sufficient composition’. This I savior: the vision of a self-sufficiency in a composition that can almost be felt physically, touched and played upon with slight variations over time or depending to the fall of light.

### ¶ *Jan Karan’s Eastfear*

‘The states that language generate are similar to the states that objects in a space generate, real, if ephermeral, yet no less true – indeed, perhaps more true – for being so. Such states, like nation-states themselves, are not merely the consequences of speech-acts, they are intrinsically performative.’ [vi]

## *To End Before You Begin...*

## Notes

[i] It was **Hito Steyerl** who made us all aware of the offline life of the Internet back in 2013. ‘The internet is probably not dead. It has rather gone all-out. Or more precisely: it is all over!’ ***Too Much World: Is the Internet Dead?*** e-flux journal no. 49, November 2013.

[ii] ‘He has a remarkable tendency to read his life as a literary text, interpreting it with the distoritions befitting the compulsive reader he’s been for so many years. He lives in an anxious state of powerful, end-of-everything psychosis. Nothing, and no one, has yet convinced him that getting old has its good points. Does it?’

[iii] ‘I’ll take the necessary steps toward bringing the story with Sophie Calle to life, which I’ve been contriving and writing down. In other words, if Don Quixote is about a dreamer who dares to become his own

dream, my story would be that of the writer who dares to bring what he has written to life, specifically, in this case, what he's invented about his relationship with Sophie Calle, his favourite "narrative artist".' ***Because She Never Asked***, p. 70.

[iv.] **Quinn Latimer**, '**Best Book Don't Care or, Poor Form from Fringe Areas**', Back Door Books, Rotterdam, 2014.

[v.] **Socrates:** Writing, Phaedrus, has this strange quality, and is very like painting; for the creatures of painting stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence. And so it is with written words; you might think they spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say only one and the same thing. And every word, when once it is written, is bandied about, alike among those who understand and those who have no interest in it, and it knows not to whom to speak or not to speak; when ill-treated or unjustly reviled it always needs its father to help it; for it has no power to protect or help itself. (**Plato**, ***Phaedrus***, 275d.)

[vi.] **Lou Cantor**, 'Prologue' in ***Intersubjectivities: Volume 1***, Sternberg Press, 2016

**John Holton** is a novelist, artist and publisher. His first two novels, ***The Readymades*** and ***Oslo, Norway*** were both published by **Broken Dimanche Press**, which he co-runs. He lives in Berlin.

2016

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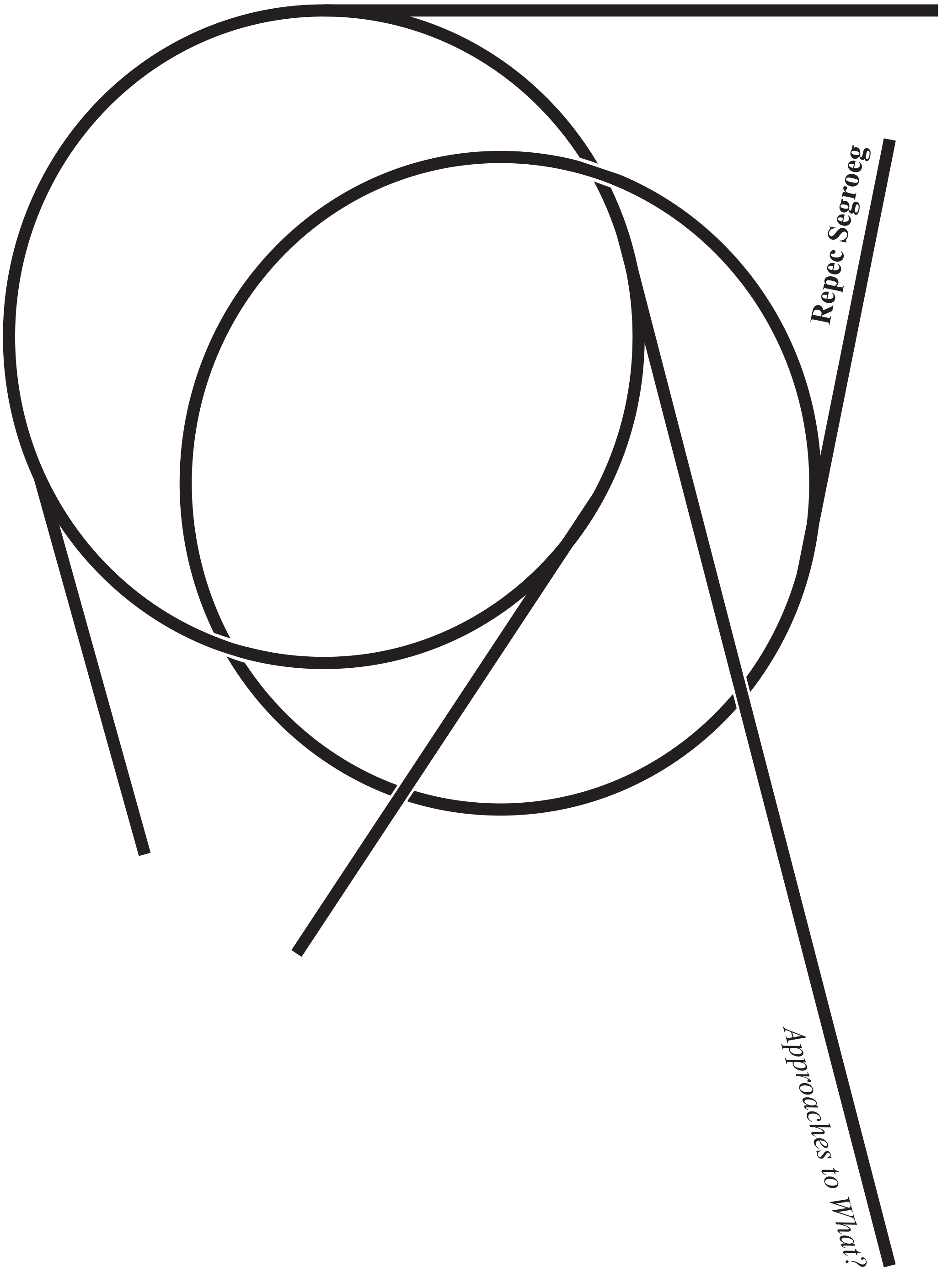


**Repec Segroeg**

*Approaches to What?*

**Repec Segroeg** was a genealogist and analogue game designer. In addition to his writerly endeavours, he was also a professional pedestrian. Many of his works deal with absence, loss and identity, and how to turn those into generative forces.

*Approaches to what?* was published in 1973 in *Common Causes*.

**WHAT SPEAKS TO US,** seemingly, is always the big event, the untoward, the extra-ordinary: the front-page splash, the banner headlines. Railway trains only begin to exist when they are derailed, and the more passengers that are killed, the more the trains exist. Aeroplanes achieve existence only when they are hijacked. The one and only destiny of motor-cars is to drive into plane trees. Fifty-two weekends a year, fifty-two casualty lists: so many dead and all the better for the news media if the figures keep on going up! Behind the event there has to be a scandal, a fissure, a danger, as if life reveals itself only by way of the spectacular, as if what speaks, what is significant, is always abnormal: natural cataclysms or historical upheavals, social unrest, political scandals.

In our haste to measure the historic, significant and revelatory, let's not leave aside the essential: the truly intolerable, the truly inadmissible. What is scandalous isn't the pit explosion, it's working in coalmines. 'Social problems' aren't 'a matter of concern' when there's a strike, they are intolerable twenty-four hours out of twenty-four, three hundred and sixty-five days a year.

Tidal waves, volcanic eruptions, tower-blocks that collapse, forest fires, tunnels that cave in, the Drugstore des Champs-Elysées burns down. Awful! Terrible! Monstrous! Scandalous! But where's the scandal? The true scandal? Has the newspaper told us anything except: not to worry, as you can see life exists, with its ups and its downs, things happen, as you can see.

The daily papers talk of everything except the daily. The papers annoy me, they teach me nothing. What they recount doesn't concern me, doesn't ask me questions and doesn't answer the questions I ask or would like to ask.

What's really going on, what we're experiencing, the rest, all the rest, where is it? How should we take account of, question, describe what happens every day and recurs every day: the banal, the quotidian, the obvious, the common, the ordinary, the infra-ordinary, the background noise, the habitual?

To question the habitual. But that's just it, we're habituated to it. We don't question it, it doesn't question us, it doesn't seem to pose a problem, we live it without thinking, as if it carried within it neither questions nor answers, as if it weren't the bearer of any information. This is no longer even conditioning, it's anaesthesia. We sleep through our lives in a dreamless sleep. But where is our life? Where is our body? Where is our space?

How are we to speak of these 'common things', how to track them down rather, flush them out, wrest them from the dross in which they remain mired, how to give them a meaning, a tongue, to let them, finally, speak of what is, of what we are.

What's needed perhaps is finally to found our own anthropology, one that will speak about us, will look in ourselves for what for so long we've been pillaging from others. Not the exotic any more, but the endotic.

To question what seems so much a matter of course that we've forgotten its origins. To rediscover something of the astonishment that Jules Verne or his readers may have felt faced with an apparatus capable of reproducing and transporting sounds. For that astonishment existed, along with thousands of others, and it's they which have moulded us.

What we need to question is bricks, concrete, glass, our table manners, our utensils, our tools, the way we spend our time, our rhythms. To question that which seems to have ceased forever to astonish us. We live, true, we breathe, true; we walk, we open doors, we go down staircases, we sit at a table in order to eat, we lie down on a bed in order to sleep. How? Where? When? Why?

Describe your street. Describe another street. Compare.

Make an inventory of your pockets, of your bag. Ask yourself about the provenance, the use, what will become of each of the objects you take out.

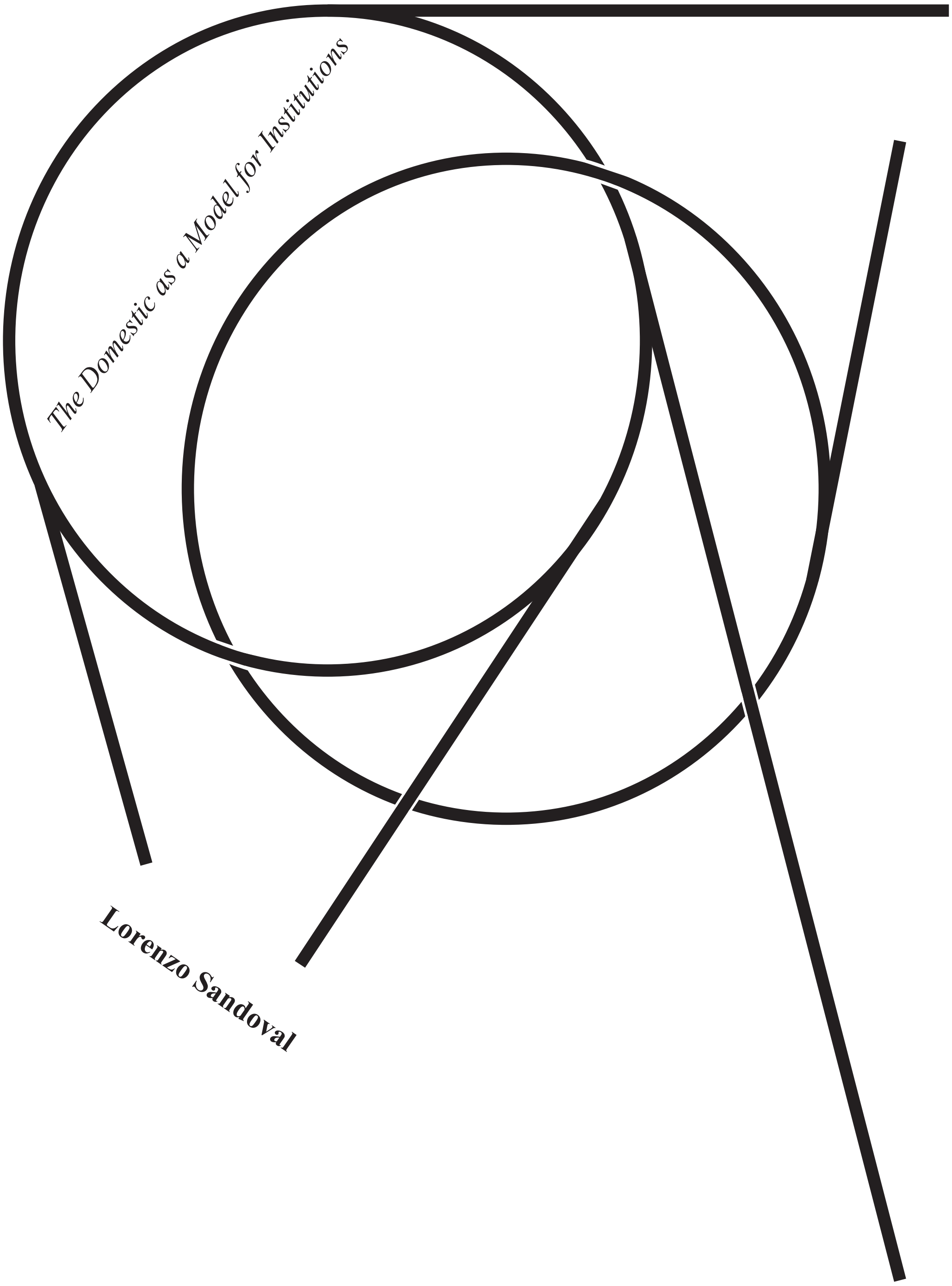
Question your tea spoons.

What is there under your wallpaper?

How many movements does it take to dial a phone number? Why?

Why don't you find cigarettes in grocery stores? Why not?

It matters little to me that these questions should be fragmentary, barely indicative of a method, at most of a project. It matters a lot to me that they should seem trivial and futile: that's exactly what makes them just as essential, if not more so, as all the other questions by which we've tried in vain to lay hold on our truth.



# *The Domestic as a Model for Institutions*

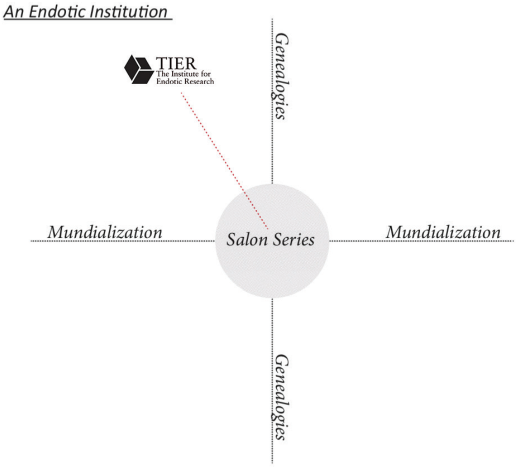
**Lorenzo Sandoval**

**Lorenzo Sandoval** works as an artist and curator. His recent research deals with divergent genealogies of the connections between image production, textile making and computation.

*The Domestic as a Model for Institutions* was read as part of *Private Space/Public Space*, a pre-celebration of international working women’s day at TIER organized by Àngels Miralda in March 2019.

## The domestic as a model for institutions

The story of The Institute for Endotic Research (TIER) starts with a failure: I prepared a proposal for a directorial position at an institution, which passed to the second round of interviews, but finally didn't make it to the next step. Together with the feeling of disappointment, as well as the sadness that such a rejection brings, I was left with one more item to be accumulated in the fatidic folder of unsuccessful applications and therefore unrealized projects. At the core of the fictional diagram I sketched to organize the proposal, there was a living room—a place for encounters called the Salon Series—as a substitute for the idea of the exhibition itself. And because my partner and I needed to do something with our kitchen—which remained unfinished since me had moved in together—this diagram became a fictional institution with an operative program of encounters situated at our home. In the form of a table and benches made from a recycled artwork, it became the infrastructure of our own kitchen and, ultimately, a pretext to invite people over to introduce their work in a very concentrated environment, both in terms of space and attention. Precisely, 14 square meters and about 3 hours per session.



The construction of that kitchen (which I undertood ultimately as an art piece itself) is presently hosted at TIER's kitchen at Donaustrasse 84, due to an undesired request to leave my house by the landlord as per the general situation of the Berlin housing market. For someone with an *Untermietervertrag*, there is not much that can be done. That hosting structure was actually the last stop of my first affair with spatial production in the threshold between artist and curator work, *The Narrative Machine*, a series I was working on for few years. This piece was a movable system of walls, seats and displays that facilitated the encounter between artworks, books and people, and it was adaptable to many situations. Basically, it arose from a rejection of the common practice of creating temporal spaces where construction materials would be hastily and uncritically discarded after exhibitions. On one hand, I was looking at Lissitzki's FIFO architecture; on the other, I was looking for a solution to the work and material put into a project as such that would have a longer life because of a preconceived adaptability toward many uses. The first appearance of The *Narrative Machine* was in 2012 in a show I curated at the now-disappeared-by-housing-issues space General Public. The exhibition was called *The Rescue of the Effects. Notes for a theory of the reader*, which was a project on artists using curatorial strategies on their work on archives, music, publication and pedagogic projects. Broken Dimanche Press released the architectural piece itself as a book with the ISBN 978-3-943196-09-2[1]. The wood used for *The Narrative Machine* was afterwards transformed into *The Institute for Endotic Research*, creating a material and conceptual continuity between both projects and, most importantly, giving the leftovers a longer life.

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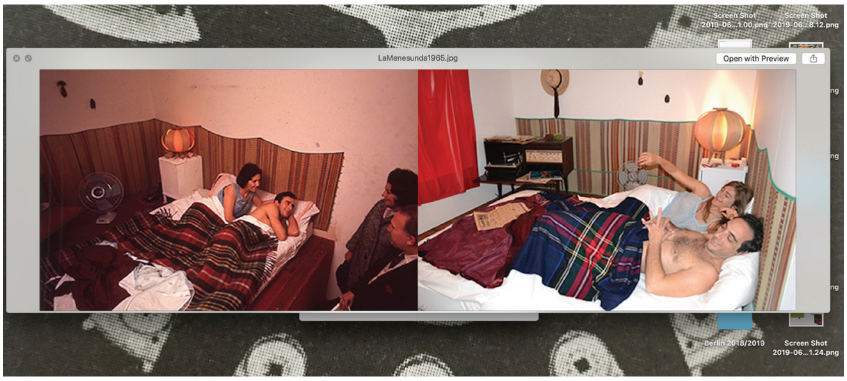
[1] https://www.brokendimanche.eu/editions#/new-gallery-20

This infrastructure in my kitchen was understood as a *habitable sculpture*, taking the idea with which Mathias Goeritz described his El Eco Museo Experimental in the early fifties. This institution was a pioneer in mixing sculpture, architecture and a program of exhibitions, events and performances as a unitary piece that worked both as an artwork by itself and as a hosting structure. Knowing Goeritz's interest in spirituality and the anti-art manifesto with "Los hartistas"[2] (the fed-ups), a humorous proposal that introduced many crafts and other activities as part of a non-art gathering, it wouldn't be misguiding also to connect this position with a conception with one leg on a pre-modern affair where artworks would not be disconnected to their context, and the figure itself of the artist would not be different that of the craft-person. A position as such would blur the transitions between productive/public work and the reproductive/domestic sphere, a separation that has been present since the rise of capitalism's exploitative entanglement.

Among many other references setting the proposal I sent with my unsuccessful application for the directorial position, I was thinking of Ana Longoni's work and her famous 'Other beginnings of the conceptualism (Argentine and Latin-American)'[3] . She uses two terms in that essay that were an important part of the conceptual apparatus for this institute. The first is a term she historizes and was coined by Oscar Massotta—in what I would read as a mistranslation of Marshall McLuhan's *media environment*. Masotta was talking about 'ambientes' to describe the process of dematerialization of conceptual art trough a conjunction of objects, processes and actions that were happening in the period at the end of the 60's and early 70's in Argentina, charged with political questions given the times in which Argentina was embedded. The atmosphere of 'kitchen-ness' or 'living room-ness' of TIER comes directly from the openness carried in the idea of the *ambiente*.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Berlin 2018/2019
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Marta Minujín & Rubén Santantonin, *La Menesunda*, 1965

She, among other historians, questions the narration in which the big western metropolises are the location of the most innovative art processes. The other term that Longoni proposed is *decentering* (or *off-center)*[4], which she applies to the practice of art history, going beyond what traditionally have been considered as the irradiation points of art, corresponding with the colonial powers map. Here it would be relevant to note how in the construction of the genealogies of contemporary art history and curatorial practices, the beginnings of the history of exhibition making would be set in the *Wunderkammer*. There, the disciplinary complex of institution making and museographic practice would be directly linked to colonial history: the collections of those cabinets were made of the matters coming from colonial enterprises. In that sense, it is even more pressing to understand this conception of the curio-cabinets—and afterwards the exhibition itself—as educational apparatuses. The taxonomical function of these historiographies would set a system of hierarchies in nature and between people. The history of exhibitions that start with the cabinets of wonders is the same one of violent exclusion of peoples from ownership and political agency, and exploitation of nature anywhere outside Europe. It is the same history that would leave any subject out of the norm without a voice or without rights towards the inner territories of the Western society: women, homosexuals, people of color, ill and poor people. The making of (art) institutions and their histories has to be rethought if we want them to be allies, otherwise they remain part of the infrastructure of the neoliberal disciplinary system.

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[2] *We are fed up with the pretentious imposition of logic and of reason, of functionalism, of decorative calculus, and of the chaotic pornography of individualism, of the glory of the day, of the fashion of the moment, of vanity and of ambition, of bluff and of the artistic joke, of conscious and subconscious egocentrism, of fatuous concepts, of the exceedingly tedious propaganda of the isms and the ists, figurative or abstract. Fed up also with the preciosity of an inverted aesthetic; fed up with the copy or stylization of a heroically vulgar reality. Fed up, above all, with the artificial and hysterical atmosphere of the so-called art world, with its adulterated pleasures, its gaudy salons and its terrifying vacuum. We recognize the necessity of abandoning the illusory dreams of the glorification of the ego and of deflating art. We recognize that human work, at the present time, is most vigorous where the so-called artist less intervenes. We recognize, more and more, the importance of the service, or of any abnegated act based on a natural ethic, all logic aside –the cultivation of an orchard, the fulfilling of a professional duty, or the education of a child.We try to begin anew from below in a spiritual-sociological sense. All established values will have to be rectified: Believe without asking in what! Make, or at least try to make man's work become a PRAYER.*
*LOS HARTOS. Otra confrontación internacional de hartistas contemporáneos (del 30 de noviembre al 20 de diciembre de 1961)*
*http://eleco.unam.mx/eleco/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/LOS-HARTOS-version-final.pdf*

[3] LONGONI, Ana, *Other beginnings of the conceptualism (Argentine and Latin-American)*, http://www.vividradicalmemory.org/htm/workshop/bcn_Essays/Inicios_Longoni_eng.pdf

[4] *With the off-center term I intend to refer to what is away of the center but also to a center that is not recognized as such, that is missed, disconcerted, which is out of its axis. Raymond Williams, in "Politics del Modernismo" (Buenos Aires, Manantial, 1997) calls to analyse the avant-gardes with their inconsistencies and distances, running away from the comfortable and today internationally adapted forms of their incorporation and naturalisation. This is: to observe the metropolis from one inside that it is out (the interior have-nots, the poor world that was always peripheral to the metropolitan systems). He concludes: "It is necessary to question a level: the metropolitan interpretation of their own processes as universal". The challenge (and the provocation) is based in reversing the usual flow (to track the effects of the center in the periphery) in order to think the opposite movement: that which has the same centre being it peripheral or of off-centre.* LONGONI, Ana, *Other beginnings of the conceptualism (Argentine and Latin-American)*, http://www.vividradicalmemory.org/htm/workshop/bcn_Essays/Inicios_Longoni_eng.pdf

So, how can we apply the *decentering* technique not only to art history, but also to institutions in the making? If we leave the museum or the Kunsthalle—just to name 2 devices—where can we go in search of other possible models? From the many possible sources to rethink these stories, let's propose five models that have worked in the sphere of the domestic.

* * *

## Nathalie Clifford Barney's salon

This first model I borrow from a lecture that Federica Bueti prepared for Spaces of Anticipation , a symposium organized in Spain in 2014[5]. Her contribution proposed the counter as a possible model for encounters, incorporating the logic of host/guest reciprocity. Her proposal was about Barney's salon, which was hosted in her own home. In Federica's words:

Paul Adget , Pavillon at 20, Rue Jacob,
*Nathalie Clifford Barney's salon*

> *Nathalie Clifford Barney's was an expatriate from The States who moved to Paris, where she initiated the Salon and the Academie de Femmes, where experimental women writer like Colette, Dujna Barnes, Gertrude Stein, Mina Loy, Renee Vivien , Marie Laurencin, Isidora Duncan, meet there. They share their interests, works, writings, and often their loves and lives. As early as 1900, man and women, young and more established writers were invited to read and present their works, meet other fellow writers and enjoy food in Rue de Jacob. The place for those gatherings often was the beautiful garden. Natalie Barney dedicated her entire life to pursue a different way of living: against patriarchy, sexual differences, the traditional role of women in society. Natalie Barney is salon host, the literary salon was her counter. To meet and have a conversation with her, to get to know the most eccentric avant-garde writer of the time one would go to the salon. Every Friday and for more than 60 years the salon was the place where all kind of professional meeting, love affairs and strange encounters would happen. By embodying her passions (for literature and for flirtations), by becoming the counter, so to speak, she created situation, hosted and became guest to her own events: where the host/guest dichotomy collapsed, because she embodies them all*[6].

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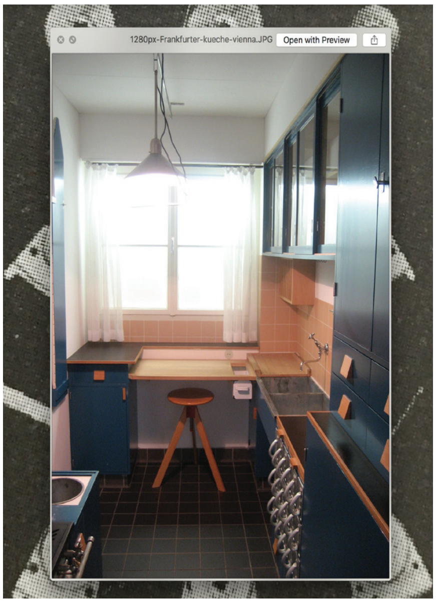
[5] SANDOVAL; Lorenzo, *Spaces of Anticipation,*http://www.on-curating.org/issue-36-reader/spaces-of-anticipation-symposium-at-eacc-in-may-2014.html#.XOf-f3tRXOQ

[6] BUETI, Federica. The quote comes from the unpublished text that was read at the symposium.

* * *

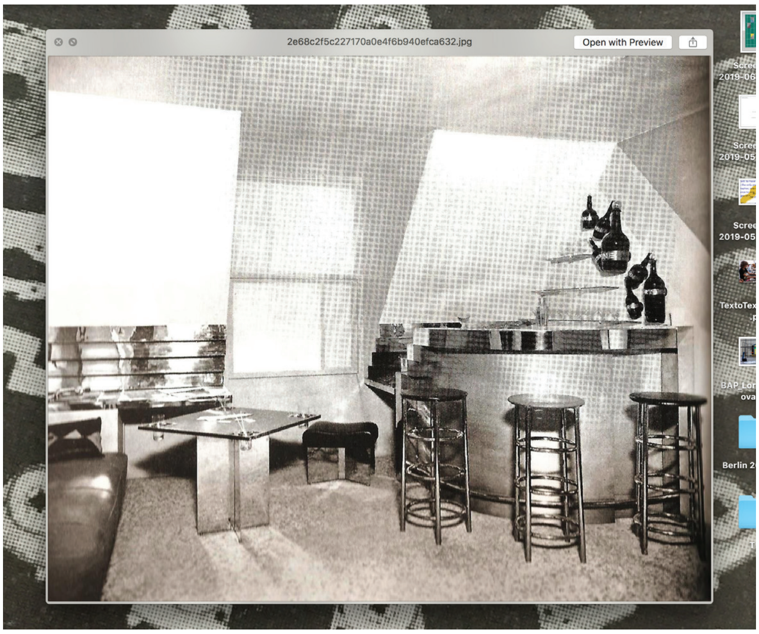
## Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky: The Frankfurt Kitchen

The Frankfurt Kitchen is one of the first times that the logic of industrial efficiency was applied to the domestic environment in architectural design. It was part of a social housing project in Frankfurt in 1926. Even if this model wouldn't be imagined as a place for hosting encounters related to art (as far as I know), the capacities for saving time and work through spatial organization would be a good example of thinking strategies for emancipation. Maria Lind analyzed this example in her essay 'Kitchens': The core question for the young woman became: *How can home construction and interior furnishings be employed to facilitate the life of working people, whether housewives, mothers, or servants? (…) Highlighting one of the crucial philosophical and practical questions of the modern project, this example reflects and shapes decision-making processes, conditions of production, and gender hierarchies*[7].



Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky,
*The Frankfurt Kitchen,* late 1920's.

Alongside the problem that this public housing initiative ended up being inhabited by white-collar workers, and not the genuine working class—as Lind tell us—it would also bring another problem: the home would become part of the production chain in a more precise way, incorporating a process of isolation. There are no more sofas in the kitchen, and these spaces are conceived for pure production. This was the in between periods of war.



Charlotte Perriand, *Bar Sous le Toit*, 1927

* * *

## Charlotte Perriand

Charlotte Perriand's work, one would say oppositely of Schütte-Lihotzky, would apply standardization as a way to create enjoyable environments: ones for hanging out at home and hosting encounters. As Catherine Slessor told us in a recent article: *Perriand shared Lefebvre's humanist, Marxist vision of equality synthesised with the capacity for creation and pleasure. She strove to devise spaces, objects and processes that went beyond bourgeois self-fulfillment or self-fashioning to activate a genuine transformation of daily existence*[8]. In that way, the domestic space was designed not as a purely productive functional space to support reproductive labor, but as a site for gatherings: the interior was pictured as a place for socialization.

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[7] LIND, Maria, *Selected Writing*, Stenberg Press, Berlin, 2010.

[8] SLESSOR, Catherine, *Charlotte Perriand (1903-1999)*
https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/reputations-pen-portraits-/-charlotte-perriand-1903-1999/10033191.article

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## Janette Laverrière

As part of the exhibition Making Room Emanuele Guidi and I co-curated at ar/ge Kunst in 2014[9], we included the work of Janette Laverrière, as well as the display piece Nairy Baghramian made for showing Laverrière's work. We were interested in the articulation of the act of hosting that the latter made to the former, and how this gesture was an echo of Laverrière's own long term practice.

Janette Laverrière in collaboration with Nairy Baghramian, installation view, 2014.

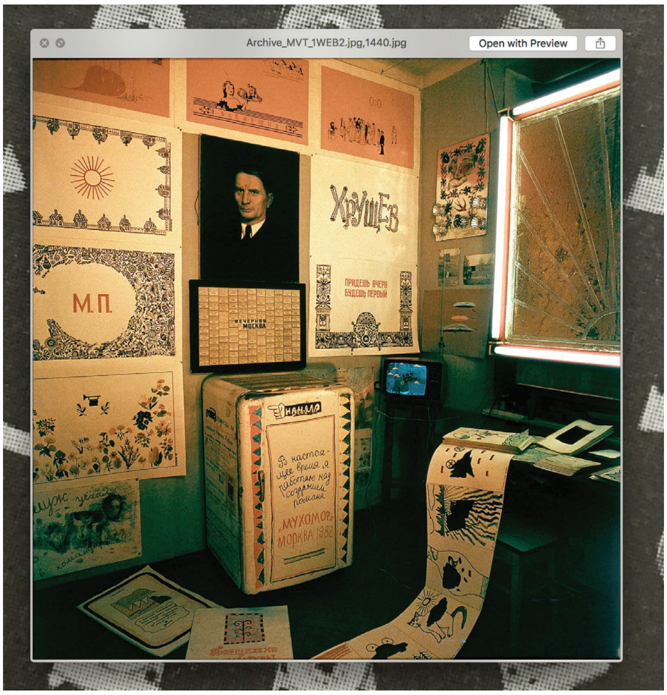
Here is an excerpt from the exhibition text Emanuele and I wrote: *The need to accommodate and follow up alternative histories is also central to the collaboration between the Swiss, naturalised French designer Janette Laverrière (1909–2011) and the artist Nairy Baghramian (1971, Iran, lives and works in Berlin), who met and began collaborating in 2008. Laverrière's drawings, furniture and objects are presented in a display system conceived by Baghramian. This includes a vitrine system for sketches, and walls painted in a watery green that recalls Laverrière's private living room. The care invested in this arrangement gives eloquent expression to the intergenerational friendship between the two women (Laverrière said they were 'sisters in spirit'), but it also highlights the interweaving of Laverrière's professional, private and political life. Alongside her work as a designer, Laverrière was among the founders of the National Front for Decorators and the Decorators Trade Union (both in 1944), and in the latter part of her career she designed 'useless' objects in which the need to tell a story prevails over function. A significant example of this is the mirror from her Evocations series: La Commune, homage à Louise Michel (2001), which evokes the French anarchist Louise Michel and her contribution to the foundation of the Paris Commune*[10].

* * *

## APTART

During the soviet period, the artists in Moscow had to develop a parallel infrastructure to present conceptual art. Since it was not allowed to do so in public, these practitioners found different approaches to deliver their work, mainly to their colleagues. One strategy was to go to the outskirts of the city. Another one, which is interesting for us here, was the way they transformed their private spaces to host gatherings.

In his essay, which opens the book 'Anti-Shows. APTART 1982-84', David Morris tell us: *Between 1982 and 1984, APTART was an artist-to-artist institutionalization of such gatherings in Moscow. A grouping of artists and artist groups, an apartment-exhibition space, a sequence of shows in an apartment and outdoors, a movement and a collective project, APTART's actions were described by its participants as "working expositions," "anti-shows," "exhibition-nonexhibitions,"*



View of the first APTART exhibition, autumn 1982, with work by the Mukhomor group.

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[9] https://www.argekunst.it/en/2014/06/04/making-room-spaces-of-anticipation/

[10] https://www.argekunst.it/en/2014/06/04/making-room-spaces-of-anticipation/

> *or — following the Socialist Realist dictum that art must be nationalist in form and socialist in content — as "apartment art" by "nationality." (The latter is an oblique but suggestive description — collapsing the nation-state into the space of an apartment, confounding the identitarian claims of nationality, and leaving the idea of "socialist in content" hanging.) The name is a contraction of "apartment art," as well as a play on the Russian APT, meaning ART: a kind of stutter, "ART ART," a repetition of "ART" across Russian and English. (…) Nikita Alekseev, in whose apartment APTART began, sees no great significance in what they did, and certainly this example of self-organization among artists is one small part of a vast web of "unofficial" activity in Moscow and beyond. But such micro-experiments in collective time and space hold important lessons for the present*[11].

* * *

These five models above can give some tips for dialectical organizations of the space, and the re-arrengment of the relationships happening in them. After looking at these sources, the writing of Silvia Federici on reproductive labor is now more relevant than ever when it comes to rethinking institution-making[12]. In her analysis of the correlations between the work in the factory and the unpaid reproductive labor of the domestic environment, she made clear the unequal distribution system of capitalism, based on the artificial distinction between private and public spheres. But she also set the basis for understanding how the commodification of every single possible bit of life operates within the algorithmic realm. With shared economies and data exploitation of any kind, the private become the biggest factory, and every single move in the domestic realm takes part in the choreography of productive forces in a renovated, exhausting way.

The first step is is to understand how the connections between the private and public sphere are linked, including how this interconnected privacy expands through the global circuits of production, asking for instance where is the copper of every machine coming from or whose hands are the one extracting them, and also who sets the conditions for this domestic environment to happen. Then the second is how to approach the quotidian with a curious sight, looking for the imperceptible, and finding way that understand the naturalized elements. Why are all those things there? Which relationships must be changed? The processes of reproduction, care, affect and conflict, and its translation to the relationships in the institution-making, might serve as a constellation to rethink labor in culture, but also thematic subjects, and power relationships. The domestic might serve as a model to decenter the history of art, but also to establish a basis for rethinking the institutions to be made with the unheard voices of history.

Lorenzo Sandoval
Berlin, March 7, 2019.

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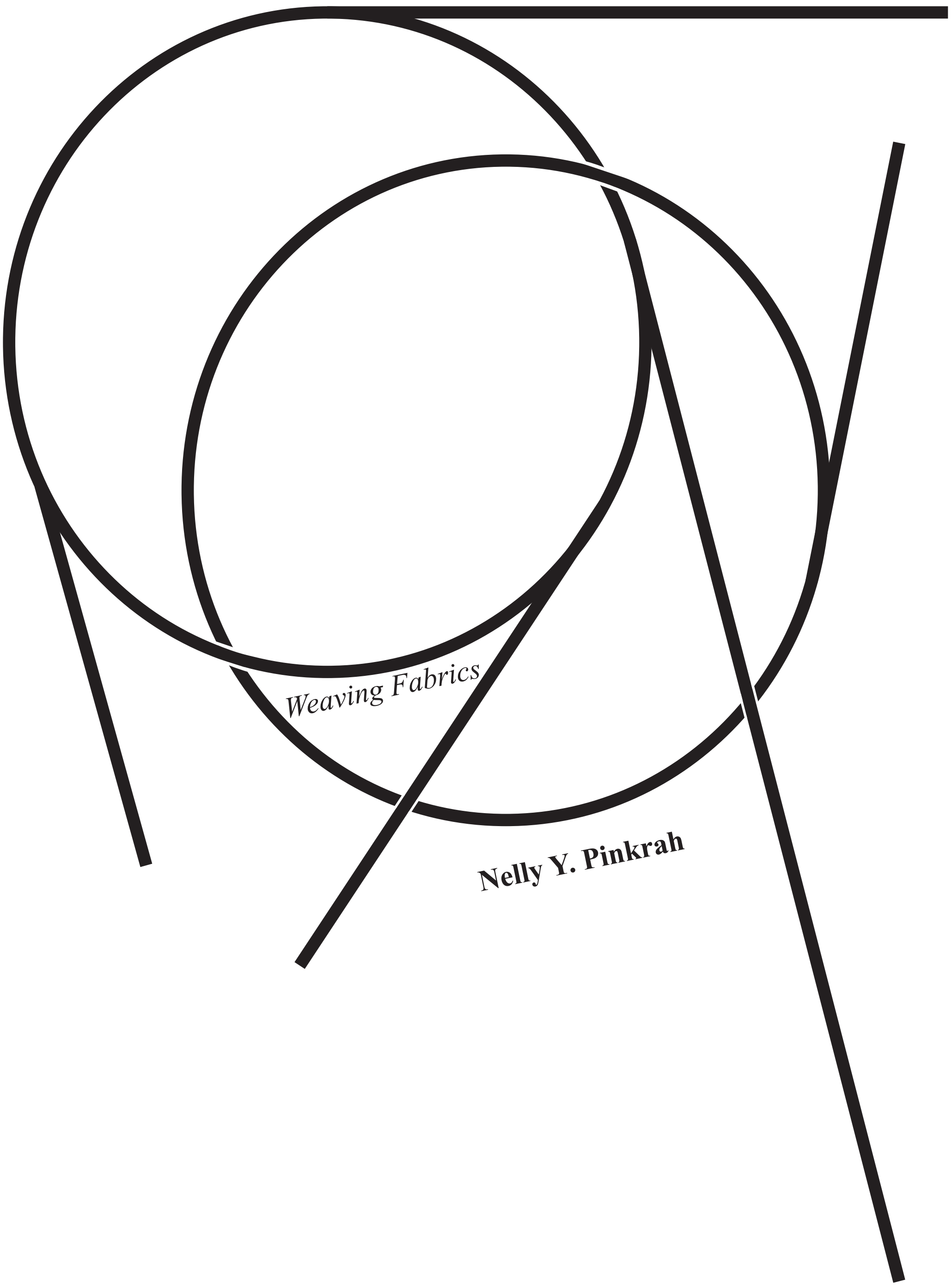
[11] TUPITSYN, Margarita and TUPITSYN, Victor and VVAA, *Anti-shows: APTART 1982-84*, Afterall Books, London, 2017.

[12] FEDERICCI, Silvia, *Caliban and the Witch, Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, Autonomedia, New York, 1998.



# *Weaving Fabrics*

**Nelly Y. Pinkrah**

**Nelly Y. Pinkrah** is a cultural and media theorist as well as a political activist engaged in different political projects. She is a research assistant at Leuphana University, Lüneburg, writing a thesis on Édouard Glissant and Cybernetics.

*Weaving Fabrics* is a version of the contribution she made for the program *Looming Creole*, organized by Filipa César, part of HWK's *The New Alphabet* in January 2019.

# Weaving fabrics
by Nelly Y. Pinkrah

> *Opacities can coexist and converge, weaving fabrics. To understand these truly one must focus on the texture of the weave and not on the nature of its components. For the time being, perhaps, give up this old obsession with discovering what lies at the bottom of natures. There would be something great and noble about initiating such a movement, referring not to Humanity but to the exultant divergence of humanities. Thought of self and thought of other here become obsolete in their duality. Every Other is a citizen and no longer barbarian. What is here is open, as much as this there. I would be incapable of projecting from one to the other. This-here is the weave, and it weaves no boundaries. The right to opacity would not establish autism; it would be the real foundation of Relation in freedoms.« (Glissant 2010: 190)*

It is opacity that is »weaving fabrics«. We are weaving, we are weary of writing, in our languages that, so we are made to believe, are somewhat remote from code. But it is true, computers operate on written language which simply means the formalization of language into a specific set of rules: files of binary, machinic language. Are there ever only two options to choose from, to operate with, to think through? What way of communication has this binary left us with, or rather, what is the way of communication this binary potentially will unclose for us?

The rationalizing impact of digital technology was one of Édouard Glissant's great fears. It would lead to a »standardized dilution« (Glissant 1997: 192) and to a homogenization of all specificity (Gyssels 2001), where chaos, the chaotic movement of Creolization and the flows of all the elements of culture(s) might have no place. This world of chaos would be the world of the incredible and sometimes, or at all times, or never, incomprehensible work of the Martinican poet and philosopher that was Édouard Glissant.

A world in Relation, a world of Creolization, a world composed of opacities.

Glissant always advocated for the unpredictable and surprise, for movement, for renewal, and for random thought – all of which are qualities of the Creole language, but the computer was incapable of, Glissant was certain. Sure, the advent of the internet, conditioned by this »universal machine«, seemed like a coming-into-being of some ideas he was reflecting on in his work: the idea of a poetics of relation, which gave the title to his seminal book *Poétique de la Relation*, written in 1990, or the *totalité-monde,* realized in its relations. Numerous possibilities seemed to emerge from this world wide web *(*»Toute poétique est un reseau« Édouard Glissant ), which was only commercialized in the 1990s: the decentralization and democratization of information promised a different order and distribution of power (and) relations, from which a utopian future stemmed. Participation and being in freedom seemed to be within reach for the oppressed people of the world; the promise of the intelligence of the many over that of the few was simply translated into a fictitious principle of collectivity; also, different modes of storing and archiving might keep dying and minoritarian languages alive; communities and peoples with similar struggles and challenges might come together in realizing these similar situations. But, the real-world uses and underlying effects would soon be crystal clear: technological superiority of the North, power and control of global private companies, of finance capital, more dominance of colonizing languages in digital spaces, which would rather lead to the misrecognition of less widely recognized languages, to the disrespect of less dominant and renowned cultural elements, to the denial of difference, to the »standardized dilution«.

In Glissant's reservations the ambiguities, as well as the hopes of early internet culture, are reflected. And although he did not know in 1990 what would become of the internet, he could not have known the prevalence of digital technologies, Glissant not only anticipated but suspected some of the developments to come. Glissants commitment to poetics and poetic knowledge, his understanding of and play with language, and his capacity to produce revolutionary concepts such as Creolization, Relation and opacity links his whole oeuvre to a cybernetic epistemology, to computational knowledge and computational realities and to contemporary politics. »The world is totality (concrete and quantifiable), echoes (feedback), and chaos (spiraling and redundant trajectories), all at once, depending on our many ways of sensing and addressing it.« (Wing: xv), the translator of *Poétique de la Relation* Betsy Wing explains in the Introduction of the work talking about Glissant's use of neologisms such as *totalité-monde*. In the same book, translated into English only in 2010, Glissant illustrates the following:

> *Not long ago I learned of a project in which a Japanese computer company was investing considerable sums of money on a theoretical study of several African oral languages. Its intention was to explore the capacity of these languages to generate a new computer language and to provide broad-based support for new systems. The primary goal of this research was, of course, to capture a potential market in the twenty-first century, and it was motivated by competition from Anglo-American companies. Still, it should be noted how the most self-interested technology was thereby sanctioning not the (actual) liberation of the languages of orality, of course, but already their right to be recognized.*
>
> *On the other side of the bitter struggles against domination and for the liberation of the imagination, there opens up a multiple dispersed zone in which we are gripped by vertigo.*

> *But this is not the vertigo preceding apocalypse and Babel's fail. It is the shiver of a beginning, confronted with extreme possibility. It is possible to build the Tower in every language. (Glissant 2010: 109)*

Everything starts with language and the experience of it, so tells us the origin myth of the Tower of Babel and so it was for Édouard Glissant. How is it possible to build the tower, in every language? To communicate with each other instead of about, through, or without one another?

Every language consists of its own opacity, something that cannot be penetrated, not expressed, not translated, cannot be repeated. It is even more than that. Opacity is present not only as an object in Glissants poetical and theoretical writing but as a method – it is a practice. In his writing it is a resistant strategy, and then precisely in this writing, it is conceptualized as a strategy of resistance. Its force is creative, aesthetic, political, social and productive. As a political strategy, or as a resistant strategy, an early form of thinking the opaque shows in his literature via the literary involvement of *marronage*. Where the enslaved people, the maroons, could find shelter from the eyes of the masters in the impenetrability of the forests, Glissant describes these forests as »the first obstacle the slave opposed to the transparency of the planter.« (Glissant 1989: 83) This opacity refers to an understanding of freedom. The freedom to be means to be moving in an environment where people can accept each other and live together without fully understanding each other or themselves. Or, to put it differently, the freedom to exist occurs where people feel obliged not to become violent when they do not understand. As Frantz Fanon wrote in *Black Skin, White Masks*: »I find myself suddenly in the world and I recognize that I have one right alone: That of demanding human behavior from the other.« (Fanon 2008) A mode, an imagination, and a practice of resistance through opacity moves on linguistic awareness and appreciation, it functions on epistemology, it always refers back to language.

Glissant says:
»We must focus on the texture of the weave and not on the nature of its components«.

»The texture of the weave« is the structure of our inner architecture, of the ways we build a community, we create relationships, we relate to ourselves and refer to each other. Glissant is telling us that ontological inquiry can never provide freedom, and understanding can never be a totality. It is not about getting to the bottom of things, or of someone, to fully comprehend and understand, to fully grasp, all of which always entails some sort of violence. The making-transparent. And despite all circumstances, the Wests regime of this transparency and its »enlightenment-episteme« (Galloway 2006: 320) prevail. Digital media are transparency's accomplice providing the condition of possibility not only for transparency's ubiquity (Beyes, Pias 2014: 109) but for its power to control, to surveil, to exercise violence – all in the name of a better, more civilized and technological world. Epistemological implications of transparency for how best to understand subject and object, how to perceive, constitute and create them in the first place are a specific Western mode of understanding. In fact, the idea of transparency is among the guiding forces that have led to the subjugation of humans, their exploitation and control. The violence and control of the gaze, the making, forcing and leaving all things visible have been theorized by many, among them anti-colonial thinkers, and arguably most famously in the form of Foucault's Panoptikum. The latter has been enriched by such scholarship as Simone Browne's who shows how surveillance and its technologies, and with it forms of governing, have always been racialized and racializing (see Simone Browne 2015). Glissant writes:

> If we examine the process of »understanding« people and ideas from the perspective of Western thought, we discover that its basis is the requirement for transparency. In order to understand and thus accept you, I have to measure your solidity with the ideal scale providing me with grounds to make comparisons and, perhaps, judgements. I have to reduce. (Glissant 2010: 190)

»(T)ransparency involves a view of things that understands them as potentially transparent and [...] the light that pervades them is subsequently the light of mind« (Brouwer, Joke/Spuybroek, Lars/Van Tuinen, Sjoerd 2016: 9), it is the rational light of Enlightenment. Nothing is left to be dark, there is only transparency – ever extending. »But enlightened thinking is not only a switch from philosophy to science but, moreover, one that is fundamentally technological. [...] Exposing the inner workings of things is in fact a technological act.« (ibid.) So, is the longing for exposure and understanding of object and subject technological in itself?

Language, in this case, would be a tool as well as an operator. For Glissant, the transparency of a language indicates its standardization which is an argument, although maybe made on another level than the tool-operator-question, hints at some kind of operationality and all the more implies geopolitical history: the standardization of French was always (also) about its spreading, codifying and (one could say) enshrining. Transparent languages, that is dominant languages, standardized to an amount where poetic creation has become impossible, where all knowledge about learning the language is believed to be in its country of origin, prevail. Even more so in digital cultures. This logic, which enforces the legitimacy of nations, is the grounds on which marginalization and domination grow. Media and technology enforce transparency, enforce the already existing power relations. Opacity and the poietic power of language exemplified through Glissants whole body of work undermine a lot of the contemporary views and understandings – instrumental, transparent, as a tool and only a tool – on language and therefore on communication and at the same time they remind us of the implications of these views, geopolitically, socially, aesthetically, and historically.

Opacity is not only a matter of aesthetics but more so one of politics. Form and content go hand in hand. Glissant reminds us of the structural dimension of language, how language informs our modes of thinking and shapes our conditions and ways of life. This focus on the materiality of language, the actual work it does, its medial forms so to say, is at the center of his work. And as he aptly points out: »In global relations languages work, of course, in obedience to laws of economic and political domination but elude, nonetheless, any harsh and rigid long-term forecast.« (107) His dialectical view on what is usually referred to as globalization, which for him was the current world situation he called Globality with its downside of economic, political, and social repressions, that is homogenization, is reverberating today. »Globalization is universality achieved through the lowest common denominator, through homogenization, through standardisation. It is the screen behind which new oppressions and dominations hide.« (Édouard Glissant interviewed by Tirthankar Chanda)

It is texture, it is consistency, it is quality, it is composition. It is the composition of the whole that will bring upon transition. »We must focus on the texture of the weave and not on the nature of its components«. To imagine and act upon different epistemologies, different histories, different relations and different practices – perhaps even all of these together – we have to harness Glissant's opacity. Because acknowledging impenetrability will provide the grounds to think of alternative ways of individual and collective,

of the subject
and to be subject,
to relate,
to solidarize,
to resist,
to narrate,
to inscribe,
and to write.

It will provide the grounds to act differently, to use what we have and to put it to different use. And to be in solidarity. With opacity. To weave a new fabric.

Because everything starts with language and from language starts everything. But with the media-technological condition of today's postmodern media societies the moment in which »duality becomes obsolete«, as Glissant calls it, has moved even farther away. The binary code of digital media not only dictates a closed logic of two mutually exclusive states – on and off, in and out, yes or no – it converts every text into that state and installs this logic in the realms of the social, the economic, the political and the cultural. Binary invites hierarchy and the hierarchization of cultures is culture of the West. Where oral languages are primitive, where they are those of the primitives, the technical and technological unadvanced, the folklore, written language will prevail, they are advanced, codifiable, the future. The future of the world. No world of chaos. No world of chaos but a world of a *certain kind* of order, a *certain kind* of structure, and a *certain kind* of hierarchy. A System of information to control.

Or, does it have to be? »The defense of languages can come through poetry« (108), says Glissant. There is no other time than this to realize the importance of the poietic power of language. We are spinning, we are spiralling, we are sprouting. We are spinning threads, but losing the common one. We are spinning and writing and weaving the fabric. Weaving a fabric is writing a text. And writing a text, spinning a thread, telling a story, recounting, revisiting, relating, is weaving fabrics. Where code exists there exist countless possibilities to write it. To create. To implement. To activate. Power can come through poetry – the same means, operating from different imaginaries, playing with different objectives, arriving at different destinations. Glissantian imaginaries tell us: »Every Other is a citizen and no longer barbarian. What is here is open, as much as this there. I would be incapable of projecting from one to the other.« (190) »Open« here does not mean transparent but it's opposite. It does not invite reduction but the acceptance of opacity. Of movement, of renewal, of the unpredictable, surprise, and of randomness. …Freedom.

> »This-here is the weave, and it weaves no boundaries.« (190)

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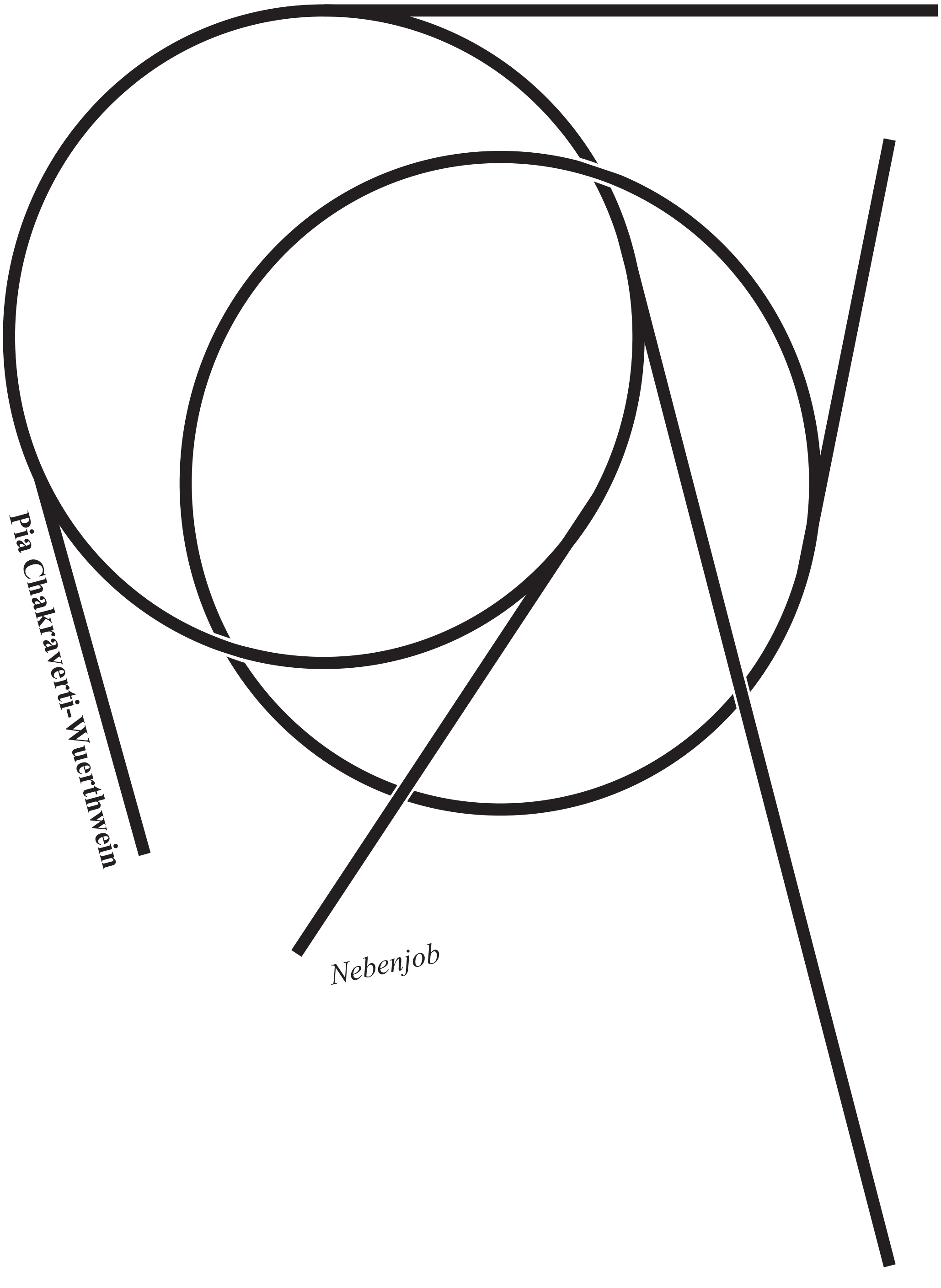


**Pia Chakraverti-Wuerthwein**

*Nebenjob*

**Pia Chakraverti-Wuerthwein** is a curator and researcher living and working in Berlin. She graduated in 2016 from Haverford College, with a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and History of Art. Since 2016 she has been part of SAVVY Contemporary, and she additionally works as a curatorial advisor to Sinema Kundura in Istanbul, Turkey and as the Curatorial Assistant for the 2019 Berlin Art Prize.

*Nebenjob* was part of the publication and reading event *Everyday, Everyday* organized by Broken Dimanche Press, Arts of the Working Class, and The Institute for Endotic Research at Università Iuav di Venezia Sede Terese in Venice in May 2019.

# Nebenjob

Sometimes when I work I play a game in which my entire world consists of what I can see through the shop window. I imagine that people cross my field of vision and then disappear somewhere underground, conveyor belts redistributing them to other destinations.

When no new character emerges, my mind empties itself completely.

This lethargy lasts only until one of my lemmings careens towards me, and into the shop. Voice croaking from lack of use, I greet them with a ‘Hallo/Guten Morgen/Guten Tag/Guten Abend.’ The easiest customers are those who are decisive and organized, the most irritating those who are *in Eile* and demanding. Occasionally I get treated to a story, a failed romance is fun to munch on; boasts about fancy cars and a new apartment in Mitte are less appetizing. As the customer leaves, I slump back into my chair and change my outlook.

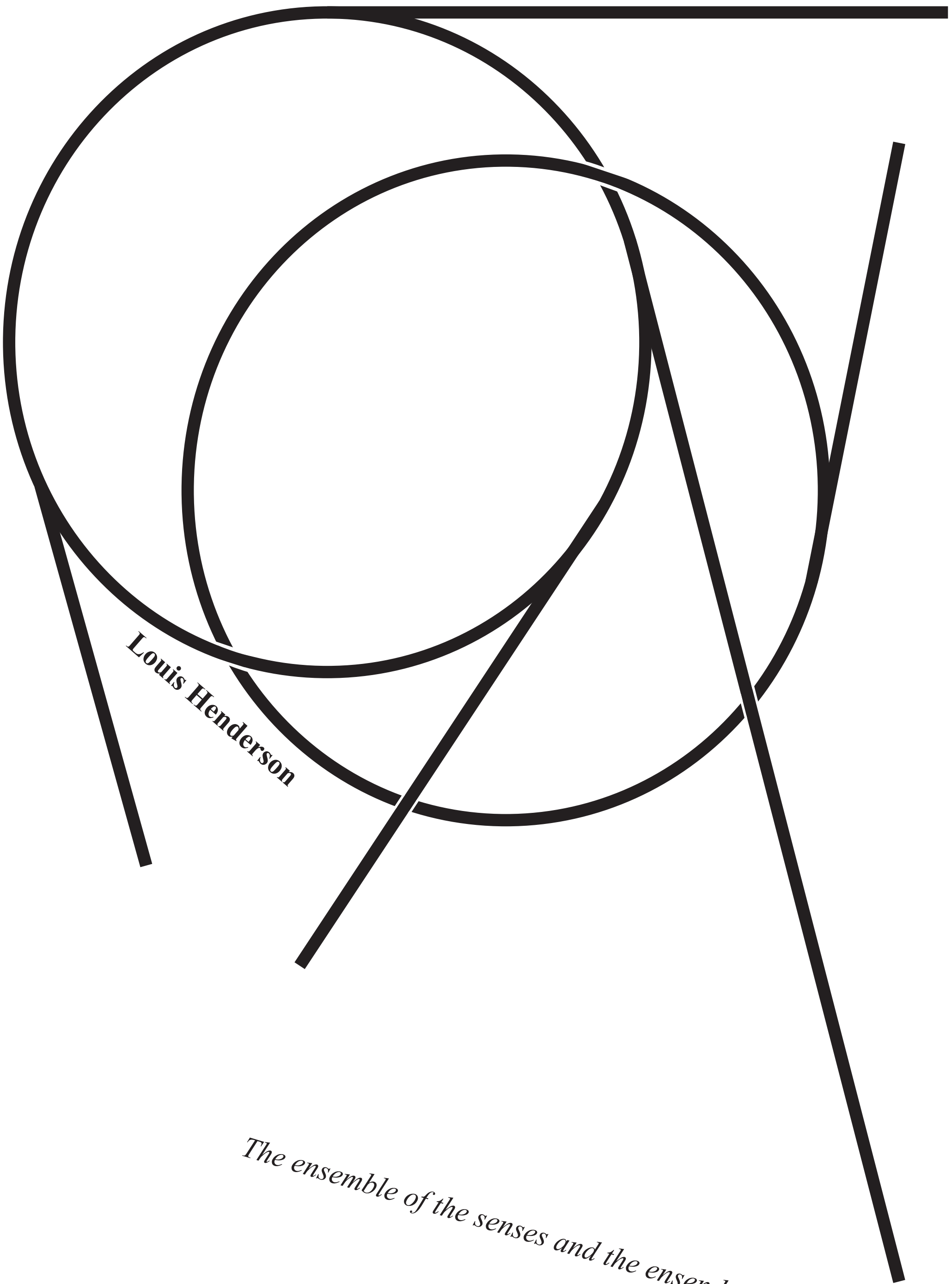
Now the passersby are pieces of trash or tumbleweed, rolling or floating or bobbing along. Time is taffy between my fingers as I turn my gaze to the computer screen for some hours of quick distraction, and then back to the lemmings who all have some very important purpose—I’m sure!—but who, from my vantage point, are chiefly differentiated by gait, height, and girth. What I wonder most about is their haste and sense of direction, like coins driven by centripetal force down a science museum funnel. I have my favorites: the woman from the Banh Mi shop, whose son also goes to school around the corner, or the man who breaks into the *Hinterhöfe* to put all the trash cans on the curb. When I see them I try to reconstruct what the rest of their days might have looked like: Her back is bent, did a Boo Hag ride her ragged the night before? His sleeve is torn, did he have a run-in with Cerberus, or some other guard dog? Does she have time for herself between work and her kid? Does he have a family?

On my most irritable days I am a jilted lover, wondering why they never show as much interest in my life as I have for theirs.

By and large, though, I observe them unseen, eyes glazing over, and occasionally talking to myself, commenting on my boredom or singing a refrain.

*Nebenjob, Nebenjob, having fun at my Nebenjob!*

— Pia Chakraverti-Wuerthwein



**Louis Henderson**

# *The ensemble of the senses and the ensemble of the social*

**Louis Henderson** is an English filmmaker whose films and writings investigate the networked links between colonialism, technology, capitalism and history. His research focuses on new materialities of the Internet and the neocolonialisation of cyberspace through planetary-scale computing.

*The ensemble of the senses and the ensemble of the social* is based on a reading that Louis Henderson gave upon invitation by Radio Earth Hold (Rachel Dedman, Lorde Selys and Arjuna Neuman) organized at The Institute for Endotic Research in January 2019.

## *The ensemble of the senses and the ensemble of the social*

> "The ensemble cuts harmony; and "the rhythm of the iron system" is broken as the beat goes on by the tone of the DRUM."
>
> Fred Moten. *In the Break: The Aesthetics Of The Black Radical Tradition,* (2003) p. 230

*The ensemble of the senses and the ensemble of the social* is a collaborative research project with the artist João Polido that will be based around various forms of listening to industrial and post-industrial soundscapes and the music that was made and/or listened to in these places. The project will engage with deep listening techniques within the geological and technological soundscapes of the coal, steel and logistics industries in and around the city of Bochum, searching for echoes and reverberations from other parts of Europe, the United States and the Caribbean that are connected through history, music and industrial capitalism.

The project seeks to complicate and question the narrative around Industrial Music as a genre, beginning from a problematic quote from Genesis P-Orridge:

"And then there's the joke we often used to make in interviews about churning out our records like motorcars —that sense of industrial. And ... up till then the music had been kind of based on the blues and slavery, and we thought it was time to update it to at least Victorian times—you know, the Industrial Revolution."[1]

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[1] RE/SEARCH #6/7: *Industrial Culture Handbook* (1983) p.9

We take issue with this statement as it attempts to circumnavigate the relationship of slavery to the Industrial Revolution. There would have been no Industrial Revolution without plantation slavery in the Americas, and furthermore the plantation slavery was itself a form of industrial capitalism that brought together human bodies and machines as forced labour within the machine of the plantation itself - hence the Blues, Jazz and Reggae for example, *are forms of* Industrial Music if we continue to understand it in this sense.

However, we would like to push the thinking and use of the aesthetics of industrial capitalism (and the labour that it entails) into an approach quite different from that of the genre of Industrial Music. Rather than focus on how music seemingly imitates the sounds and spaces of industry, we are more interested in listening to the ways music has been (and can be) made to offer liberation to the violent spatio-temporal restrictions imposed on the human body through industrial capitalism. For example; listening to how polyrhythmic vocal phrasing in Motown records of Marvin Gaye gave a completely different "erotics of time"[2] as a political gesture that broke with the temporal ordering of the Fordist production line, or how the nightclub offers an out-of-work-hours moment of utopia in which the (body)gesture is, (to quote the Techno track by Theo Parrish): "Heal Yourself and Move."

Today however I will particularly focus on how music has been and can be used, not only as release from the hardships of labour but as resistance to industrial capitalism and the systems it sets in place to entrap people within repetitive cycles through history.

We will situate ourselves in England for this talk - Beginning in 1978, the year of the Winter of Discontent, a period of strikes by public sector trade unions within UK industry, and also the year before Margaret Thatcher came into power as Prime Minister - and we will move through different sonic spaces until 1990, the year Thatcher went out of power and the euphoric beginnings of UK the  rave scene. So this talk plots its route through the Thatcher years basically. And we will be listening for echoes of resistance to the Neo-liberal regime of Thatcher's government, particularly in relation to the problems of industrial capitalism and race at that time. Echoes of resistance as heard through the musical production in the UK.

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[2] Fred Moten. *In the Break: The Aesthetics Of The Black Radical Tradition,* (2003) p. 225

To begin with - A song from the city of Birmingham, from the neighbourhood of Handsworth to be precise. In Handsworth Park you can find the graves of the three so called fathers of the Industrial revolution: James Watt, Matthew Boulton and William Murdoch.  Birmingham is the second most populous city in the UK after London, and was a centre for Industry from the 18th century on, with coal mines, coking, iron foundries, glass factories, brickworks and steel mills. Handsworth is also a neighbourhood with a long history of migration from ex British colonies such as Ireland, India and different parts of the Caribbean and Africa. Post WW2 labour shortages encouraged migration on a mass scale. The song I will play is called Handsworth Revolution (I will in fact play the dub version from the 12 inch release) from 1978 and is by a reggae band called Steel Pulse.

PLAY - *Handsworth Revolution Version*: https://youtu.be/MUGhkty4oZs?t=322

Here I would like to speak very briefly of a film from 1986 by the Black Audio Film Collective. The film is called Handsworth Songs, and was an essay film that looked into the period of Civil unrest in the UK during the years of Margaret Thatcher from 1981 - 1985. The film focuses on riots (primarily against racist policing) in minority ethnic communities in Handsworth and London, yet this was a period in which riots took place all over the country, from Bristol in the south to Liverpool and Leeds in the North. The film draws connections between the riots and the history of migration from ex-British colonies after the second world war, the police/state racism and oppression that these people faced - and the difficulties as low paid workers within British factories. It is a film that re-tells the story of British industrial capitalism, creating a kind of echo from the past that reminds us of the relation of British industry to plantation slavery. The voice-over in the film reminds us; “there are no stories in the riots, only the ghosts of other stories.”

“The film begins and ends with the footage of a black guard admiring a large fly wheel in an unspecified museum of industrial history. This wheel can be read as a symbol of the eternal return of the past in the future; the expropriated labour of the guard’s slave ancestors, transferred into the dead labour stored up in the machine itself. But also, as the narrator confirms, in the movement by which ‘the living transform the dead into partners in struggle’.”[3]

I will now play a song that features prominently in the film, it is called *Jerusalem* and is by Mark Stewart and the Maffia, produced by Adrian Sherwood - it is from 1982 - the year after the first major rioting took place in the UK.

PLAY - *Jerusalem*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZa-OAF0unk&t=2s

What you have just heard is a dubbing, a versioning, an echoing and spiral re-telling of one of the most famous poems from the UK. William Blake’s famous protest poem: “And did those feet in Ancient time” which was versioned into a kind of hymn in 1916 by Sir Hubert Parry, called Jerusalem - which is considered the unofficial national anthem of the UK. However Blake never intended his poem to be a celebration of British nationalism, but more a lament or perhaps speculation for a time over and beyond industrial capitalism. Adrian Sherwood and Mark Stewart brilliantly bring back the poem to a form of protest and away from its nationalist appropriation by the British right. Cleverly they do this through the sound of Dub, a music that came from Jamaica in the 1970s and that continues to infuse and inform British music to this very day. Using techniques of echo and delay this dub version spins the narrative into a different history through the form of a spiral that breaks with the monotonous repetitiveness of the circles of industrial capitalism.

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[3] Josephine Berry Slater “Black Grammatology” (2007) www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/black-grammatology

Now I shall move to the West of the British Isles to Wales, we will hear a song by the British industrial group Test Department. This is a song made in collaboration with the South Wales Striking Minors Choir - and was from an album from 1984 called Shoulder to Shoulder. - It was intended as music to fuel the miners strikes against Margaret Thatcher’s large scale closures of the coal mines in the UK.

PLAY - Introduction to *Shockwork*: https://youtu.be/eu5-hWeeCr8?t=218
And then *Comrades*: https://youtu.be/7ju2wSFE2Vw

I have spoken a lot about echoes today, and this really comes from a great interest and a recently developing friendship and eventual collaboration with the writer Louis Chude-Sokei. Louis understands the echo as a metaphor for history, and a metaphor for reciprocity - in his brilliant essay Dr Satan’s Echo Chamber Louis speaks of the the Big Bang, and says: “It is a sound which makes possible the universe and then the world. Creation is merely an echo of that primal sound, a product of its sonic waves. This myth establishes one of the most crucial dialectics in human knowledge: sound and silence. What bridges the two elements is echo, the traces of creation. If sound is birth and silence death, the echo trailing into infinity can only be the experience of life, the source of narrative and a pattern for history."[4]

Louis has also spoken elsewhere of Edouard Glissant's understanding of what he called in his Poetics of Relation: "a reconstituted echo or a spiral retelling"[5] - so we can understand the echo as something that revisits the past, but in a form that breaks away from cyclical repetition into a spiral versioning of the original. In this sense I would like to end with a song that comes from Leeds, a large industrial town in the north of England - this is a song from the genre that was called "Bleeps and Bass" - a particularly British versioning of techno and house that received echoes from across the Atlantic - both the USA and the Caribbean. From Detroit and Kingston lets say. It is by a producer called Ability ii, and is called Pressure Dub - and is a great hommage to the reggae nightclubs that Ability ii visited in the neighbourhood of Chapeltown in Leeds in the 1980s. The song was released in 1990, the year that Margaret Thatcher came out of power, and the year in which the beginnings of the somewhat utopian and euphoric era of rave culture in the UK. (How do you spell Leeds? Two Es and LSD!) Raves that took place within old factories and warehouses and providing a break from the the "rhythm of the iron system". I will play this song, and allow us to think about the possibility of how a reconstituted echo or spiral retelling might be a prophetic vision of the past.

PLAY - *Pressure Dub*: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TBgztBW01jg

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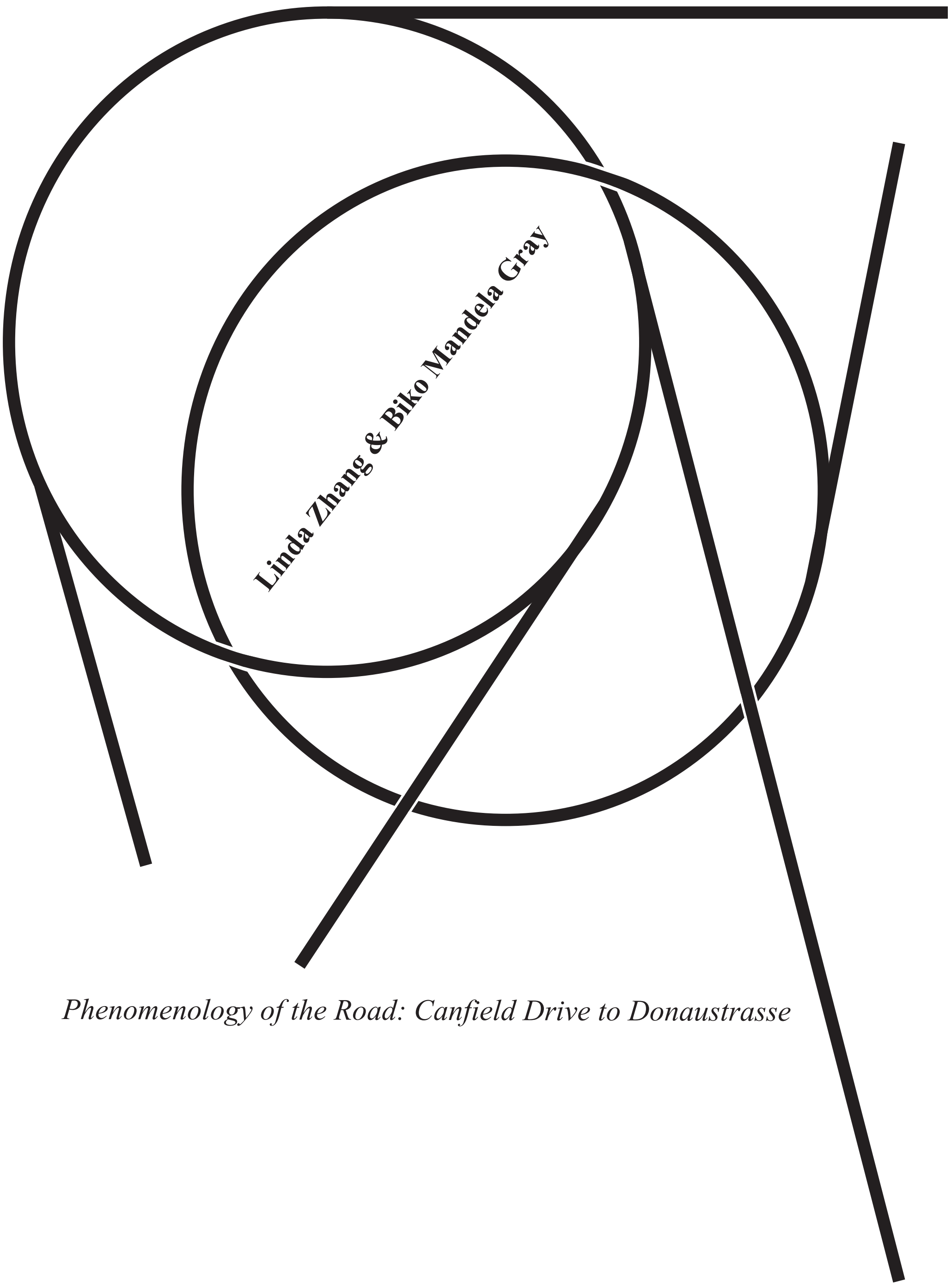
[4] Louis Chude Sokei. *Dr Satan's Echo Chamber* (2008) p. 6

[5] Édouard Glissant. *Poetics of Relation (*1997) p.16



**Linda Zhang & Biko Mandela Gray**

# *Phenomenology of the Road: Canfield Drive to Donaustrasse*

**Linda Zhang** is a principal at Studio Pararaum and an assistant professor at Ryerson University SID. She was the 2019 NCECA Multicultural Fellow, 2017-2018 Harry der Boghosian Fellow at Syracuse University as well as a 2017 Fellow at the Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik ZK/U.

**Dr. Biko Mandela Gray** is an assistant professor of religion at Syracuse University. His work operates at the nexus and interplay between continental philosophy of religion and theories and methods in African American religion.

The text in this photographic artwork was published in the Journal of Architectural Education in March 2019. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/10464883.2019.1560800

# Phenomenology of the Road: Canfield Drive to Donaustrasse

Situated between Canfield Drive, Ferguson and Donaustrasse, Berlin, this photographic essay conceptualizes atmosphere as an affective reality that disrupts stable narratives of memory and history in architecture. Drawing on Canfield Drive, the authors show how architectural commemorative practices can often produce unresolved and irresolvable tensions. They suggest a commemorative practice of atmospheric impasse: instead of turning to the past as a singular, stable historical referent, people perform commemorative practices that can speak to the past as fractured spaces of perpetual contestation. Drawing on Donaustrasse, the authors illicit a contested atmosphere beyond site specificity; conceptualizing every road—every quotidian space—as necessarily caught up in a web of contradictory affective flows and charges all around us. The photographic essay takes Canfield Drive on a stroll along Donaustrasse, putting the contested affective and normative flows of these two spaces in dialogue with one another.

# Canfield Drive

## Commemorative Atmospheres of Impasse

**Linda Zhang**
Ryerson University

**Biko Mandela Gray**
Syracuse University

In this article, the authors conceptualize atmosphere as an affective reality that disrupts stable narratives of memory and history in architecture. Drawing on Canfield Drive—the street where Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson killed Michael Brown—the authors used the slipcasting technique to show how architectural commemorative practices can often produce unresolved and unresolvable tensions. Through slipcasting, the authors suggest a commemorative practice of atmospheric impasse: instead of turning to the past as a singular, stable historical referent, people perform commemorative practices that can speak to the past as fractured spaces of perpetual contestation.

> If we find in the forest a mound, six feet long and three feet wide, raised by a shovel to form a pyramid, we turn serious and something in us says: here someone lies buried. That is architecture.
>
> —Adolf Loos[1]

At first glance, the past appears fixed and solid. Immured as a configuration of what Raymond Williams once called “finished products,” the past is often deployed as an essentialized referent, the immutable site of individual and collective memories that say something about the purportedly dynamic present.[2] The past’s apparent solidity is the basis for certain forms of thought and analysis, particularly in the realm of architecture, to draw conclusions or to make purportedly informed claims about the present. However, the acts of recollection and remembrance do not necessarily substantiate a coherent image of the past. When we remember or recollect the past, we “re-member” or “re-collect,” piecing together what has transpired. From the aforementioned perspective, “re” is a repetition, recounting the structural elements of a fixed past as an object lesson to affect a present course of action. From another perspective, “re” is a reorganization, meaning that the cognizant present sets the scattered pieces of the past in their proper place. Of course, this perspective can be just as whole as the previous one, gathering the fragments to make them “complete.” We pursue a different approach, gathering contradictory evidence from a past event to ensure that we cannot put that event to rest. The pieces are not at peace.

If remembrance is the past properly pieced together, then the past pieces are not simply scattered chronologically; they are also scattered spatially. We emphasize the impossibility of evacuating the spatiality of memory, and we call attention to the affective power of past spaces or sites as memorial gathering points. In this regard, monuments and memorials announce the spatiality of memory, disclosing the dimensions of an ostensibly agreed-upon past to help us remember. Their materiality is supposed to mirror our collective consensus about the past and therefore allow us to rehearse what happened. But the process of re-membering the past is not a purely rational relationship between thinking subjects and material objects. The previously unorganized fragments may be re-membered cognitively, but the meaning of a memorial can elicit conflicting emotions about that commemorated past. Therefore, memorial structures generate and circulate feelings; they are erected in service of what Sara Ahmed calls *affective economies*, defined as the process whereby “the movement between signs or objects converts into affect.”[3] We are drawn to the past—we build monuments and memorials—not simply because the past says something about our present but also because the past generates feelings: guilt or triumph, pain or pleasure, nostalgia or disgust.

Ahmed's notion of affective economy makes it clear that affects carry within them what Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg call a *pre-personal* character.[4] In other words, they "do not originate within an individual psyche" and therefore do "not reside positively in consciousness."[5] As affects, emotions such as anger, sadness, joy, nostalgia, and even hatred are not the products of individual dispositions but are instead "effect[s] of the circulation between objects and signs."[6] What affects do, then, is circulate in an environment, shaping and being shaped by intersecting people, objects, signs, and histories. Through this continuous circulation, according to Ahmed, affects—like hate and disgust, for example—have the capacity to intensify; the past's influence on the present is due to an accumulation of affective states that become potentialities always already prone to eruption at any moment.

Because affects circulate, they have a direction of flow, even if the magnitude of that vector is only ever so slight. Thus, the spaces we occupy are never neutral. However, we might not acknowledge the affective charge (for example, directionality) of a space when we are already affectively charged in the same direction; we are moving in the same direction as the flow. Affective states are therefore prone to eruption when we are not oriented with a vector of even the most minutely different magnitude; the difference can disrupt the circulatory flow. By simply changing vector orientations, turning away from the flow of normative or dominate forms of recollection, an affective eruption can occur at any moment.

Consider, for example, Charlottesville, Virginia, in August 2017, where a statue of a Confederate general (the result and perpetuation of a commemorative practice) incited lethal violence in service of white supremacist nostalgia. The statue was erected as a testament to the Confederacy's honor. Its presence announces a structural—and, due to its erection in a public park, state-sanctioned—affiliation with the Confederate South's lifeworld, which was premised on the white supremacist capitalist institution of chattel slavery. The statue itself, as sign and object, is a site where the affective economy of white supremacist nostalgia—one of many possible orientations of affective flow—is not only circulated but also *validated* and *vindicated*.

Confederate statues like the one in Charlottesville regulate the flow of affects; by commemorating figures in public, Confederate statues and other monuments attempt to both recall and reclaim a shared past, standing as affective tethers and affective amplifiers for what are purportedly shared perspectives on the past and its significance. As Donald Trump once suggested, if we rid ourselves of Confederate statues, then we must *also* rid ourselves of all historical statues because all the founders of the United States were slaveholders. To destroy the commemoration of the South is also to destroy the commemoration of the nation's founding—a founding that is rife with the contradiction of fighting for freedom while owning human beings.

Why do we bring up the relationship between affect and commemorative practices? Why summon this discourse about statues and monuments in a journal on atmospheres? As we will show through our design work, the affective power of commemorative practices (whether they be statues or other memorials) serve to direct and intensify the flow of affects until the affects themselves become disentangled from the specificity of the site/s that seek to inaugurate, sustain, or revivify them. In other words, by accumulating and regulating the flow of affective engagements and responses, commemorative practices contribute to the virtuality or potentiality of affective flows, turning specific affects into *atmospheric conditions* that create the possibility for the eruption of emotions. We define atmospheric conditions in precisely this way: atmospheres are affective economies that originate in particular spaces and places; over time and through the accumulation and regulation of affect, these affective economies exceed the people and the "originary" sites that purportedly inaugurated the feelings, becoming atmospheric in their manifestation. We call this phenomenon *atmospheres of commemoration*: commemorative practices that create potential affective flows—*atmospheres*—that can and will be activated and actualized through certain triggers.

By disentangling affects from the specificity of a site, commemorative atmospheres do more than simply announce agreed-upon perceptions of and feelings about the past. While affective economies are deeply embedded in the specificity of place, a common misconception is to name them as an authentic reflection, character, or attribute of that place. We will show, instead, that commemorative atmospheres operate with a level of autonomy from the site itself.

If Ahmed is correct that affects are created as "the movement between signs or objects," then affects are not just tethered to a site; they are also tethered to the objects that interact with the site, which are infinite and polyvalent. Thus, atmospheres of commemoration can simultaneously arouse feelings of sentimental nostalgia *and* visceral anger in the same physical space. A single site has the potential for infinite contradictory affects, depending on the objects and signs present, meaning that affects retain a level of autonomy from the site while simultaneously being enmeshed and embedded within the site. In sum, commemorative atmospheres do not disclose agreed-upon pasts, although their emergence operates in favor of historical and memorial consensus. Instead, these atmospheres, inaugurated by commemorative sites, announce the *disruption* of longstanding and normative modes of historical recollection. Once affect becomes virtual, it is an open field of inquiry, interpretation, and action.

This is precisely what our design research sought to interrogate: instead of expressing stable, fixed, and linear historical narratives that supposedly speak to collective sentiments, commemorative atmospheres always carry within them the reality that the past and its significance are spaces of contested affective economies via various modalities of recollection. A Confederate statue invokes feelings of nostalgia *and* disgust; it holds within it the atmospheric potential to engender emotions of warm Southern pride or enraged racial and political resentment.

According to Williams, the past is a space of tension between "received interpretation" and "practical experience," between the historically sedimented norms of social memory and the lived (out) engagements of contemporary socialities whose constitutions are more diffuse and fractured than the "received interpretation" instantiates.[7] A statue discloses far more and far less than the mere historical presence of a specific actor; it announces a given tradition whose very stability was and remains in a state of "unease" and "stress." The contested affective nature of the past, embedded in commemorative atmospheres and embodied in commemorative practices, calls into question the validity of certain normative memories, of singular "authentic" affective flows. What emerges is a space of perpetual tension, of unresolved contestation, which requires a rethinking of and reorientation toward the very idea of the past.

In highlighting the under- and overtones of the past—particularly in relation to individual and collective memories embodied by commemorative practices—we are also attuned to the fact that history is *never* solid, never fixed or stable. Instead, history—especially social history—is a constellation of competing traditions, affective flows, and figurations of what has come before. Because history, the interpretive recollection of the past, is affective—because the past both generates and regulates feelings within certain social formations—it struggles to maintain its coherence when it is refracted through the lenses of various communities.

This is not simply the case for Confederate statues—nor is this contestation merely historical or historicized. Sometimes commemorative practices have the tension built into them as part of their constitutive structure; their material ambiguity mirrors the sociohistorical ambiguity of the very event commemorated in a structure of remembrance. This was and is certainly the case in Ferguson, Missouri, where, in the aftermath of August 9, 2014, when Darren Wilson killed Michael Brown, an inadvertent memorial was constructed and embedded within the public space of the street. This inadvertent memorial, as we will show, mirrored the actual flow of the road itself. Roads direct the flow of traffic; and when two yellow doublelines are painted in the middle of the road, the road itself regulates and directs oppositional flows, channeling the movement of cars in opposing positions. Canfield Drive is unique, however, in that the (again, inadvertent) memorial embedded in the road itself serves not to regulate opposition, but to expose it in its unresolved and irresolvable character.

Moreover, the opposition announced by way of this inadvertent memorial is not (simply) directional—that is, in terms of traffic; it also exposes politically affective flows that are oppositional in nature. By refusing to memorialize Brown or Wilson—that is, by refusing to "take a side"—the memorial in the road creates a commemorative atmosphere of impasse. In other words, the road itself simply announces the encounter; it operates as nothing more than a marker of a past occurrence whose historical meaning (and therefore historical value) cannot be disentangled from the oppositional affective economies (in this case, affective economies that are largely racialized) circulating throughout the United States.

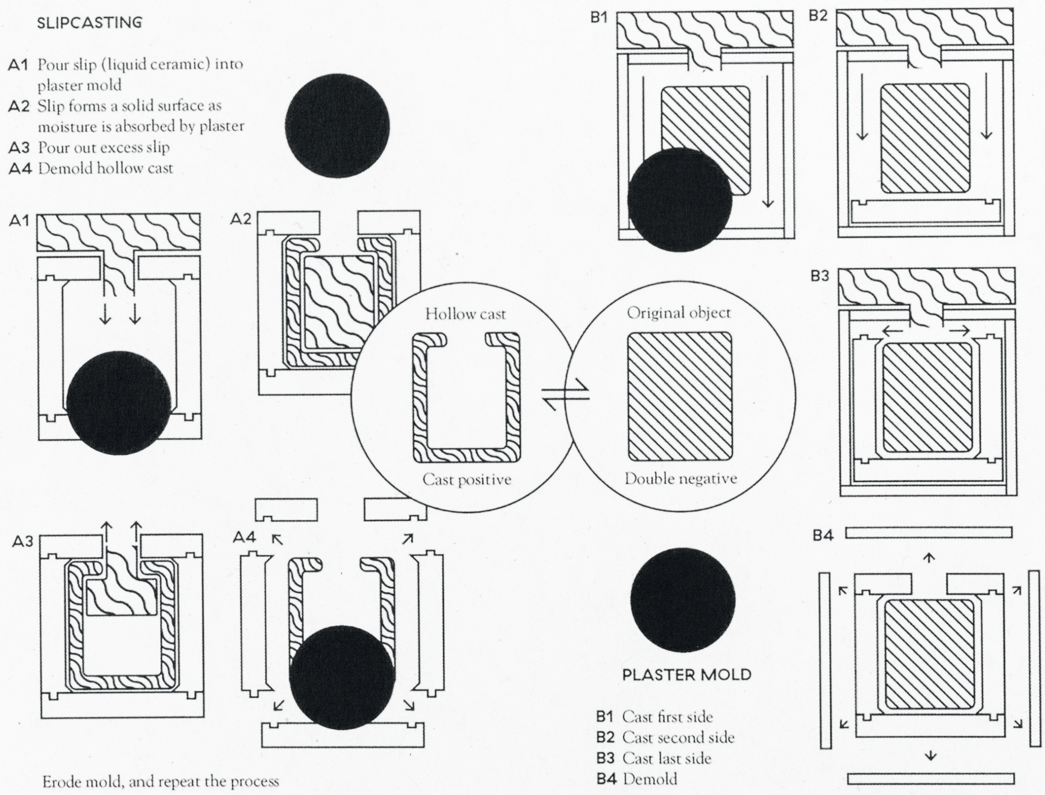
After Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Michael Brown on Canfield Drive, an informal memorial of teddy bears, flowers, and candles accumulated on the sidewalk beside the shootout site. These material objects, placed at the site of Brown's death, recalled the life and premature death of a teenager, and for those who find Brown innocent, the objects were necessary for their grief. However, for those who find Wilson innocent, these objects operated in the wrong affective direction and thus violently contradicted their recollection of Brown as a criminal whose life should not be memorialized. Unsurprisingly, this contestation in the site's affective flows physically manifested itself; shortly after the memorial was erected, it was anonymously burned to the ground, and an adjacent tree burned in the process. This act of erasure was as much an act of violence toward those grieving Brown as it was an act of affirmation for those supporting Wilson. Further physical contestations continue to occur at the site; a tree was planted in a neighboring park in honor of Brown, labeled with a dedication plaque, and within twenty-four hours, the tree and the plaque both went missing.

The cycle of building and erasure is a familiar tale in the urban environment today. From sites of contested memory to sites of political power, building practices perform a series of substitutions in the struggle to affirm competing narratives—each from a different affective orientation deemed authentic, deemed the only way to read the site or its architecture. This repetitive cycle also brings to light the limitations not only of affirmative commemorative practices but also of affirmative philosophical and political practices. In attempting to affirm one recollection of the past, we erase many other recollections. We fail to recognize the way in which our affective experience of the past—through the site and architecture—are formed only *in relation* to other objects and do not belong to the site or architecture itself, producing infinite and often contradictory interpretations. Within a commemorative practice (both spatial and political) that attempts to assign, fix, and affirm a singular meaning, memory, or belief, there is no room for interpretation, no room for contradictions. Therefore, at Canfield Drive, there has been no room for the fact that we will never know if Brown or Wilson was the criminal in this act of violence that ended the former's life.

Thinking through affect and atmosphere, we saw this site as a testing ground to explore how memory and identity shape and are shaped by architecture, place, our experience of architecture and place, and the infinite relays (that is, affective circulations) formed through architecture, place, and us. Atmosphere is crucial here, as one's emotional and affective reaction to Brown's death will certainly shape one's engagement with the asphalt. Sympathize with Brown, and the asphalt feels like it's mourning; it is a space where the tragic and unjust loss of an innocent life has been concretized. Sympathize with Wilson, however, and the asphalt feels tragic, though overcome with a feeling of justice service; an officer of the law did, indeed, protect and serve the community from criminality. Neither side has taken preference in the national consciousness; the site is—and from our perspective, always will be—a site of impasse, a place where tensions will be unresolved. And upon the lines of this impasse, the country is split; black *and* blue lives matter—and, ironically, the asphalt of the road itself already articulates this impasse.

Upon having the other memorials destroyed, Brown's family had a regular block of asphalt, slightly larger than the span of his body, removed from the middle of Canfield Drive, where his body bled out. They intended to use this asphalt for his headstone, but they found that it

**Figure 1.** Illustration explaining the slipcasting process. (Diagram by Common Name.)


SLIPCASTING
A1 Pour slip (liquid ceramic) into plaster mold
A2 Slip forms a solid surface as moisture is absorbed by plaster
A3 Pour out excess slip
A4 Demold hollow cast
A1
A2
Hollow cast
Cast positive
Original object
Double negative
A3
A4
Erode mold, and repeat the process
B1
B2
B3
B4
PLASTER MOLD
B1 Cast first side
B2 Cast second side
B3 Cast last side
B4 Demold

Inherent to the process of slipcasting ceramics, there is a continuous relay between oppositions—positive and negative, cast and mold—which questions the possibility of an original object, making it at once a positive original and double negative mold. The plaster mold is used as a negative in order to form the hollow positive cast. At the same time, the plaster mold is also the negative of the original object, precisely because the original object is used as a mold for the plaster mold—a double negative.

was too crumbly. Nonetheless, this missing section of the road was paved over with new asphalt, covering the yellow road lines and leaving a void where his body once lay—an unintentional marker (Figure 1). This marker remembers his life, the void of his life, but, being nothing, the marker sides with no one. Gone are the yellow double-lines, and gone are the stuffed animals and flowers; this piece of asphalt now stands as a memorial with no normative trajectory, a monument to a death whose meaning was not, and cannot be, resolved. In its very structure, Canfield Drive stands as an unfixed commemorative practice; it therefore stands as an interpretive impasse, producing and maintaining an atmosphere wherein (at least) two traditions of memory, (at least) two affective economies, will never resolve themselves. The site is revealed and simultaneously contested through narratives that claim the site as proving grounds for conflicting ideologies. In the end, this unintentional and unassuming piece of newly paved asphalt becomes the most powerful memorial on the site. Being unassuming, the marker makes the experience and phenomenology of the road all the more powerful, for the experience of its impassive ambivalence disrupts our affective sensibilities.

We might think of *impasse* as a kind of stasis; definitionally, impasse invokes a "deadlock," which suggests that no progress is possible—if by "progress" one means overcoming opposition. Our work here, however, calls that notion into question, instead invoking impasse as a space of relay, of dynamic negotiation and contestation that dialectically moves back and forth between the two opposing realities. By thinking with this site, we remained convinced that, at an architectural level, moving forward is not about finding means to overcome this impasse; it is not about agreement with one side or another. Rather, impasse is implicit to the polyvalent nature of reality and to the affective economies that therefore circulate among us.

Impasse is thus something that, by definition, cannot be overcome. Nevertheless, the remarkably human need to remember and reify the past persists. In the process of bereavement, we still need to remember, and we need ways of commemorating what has been lost. Memorials are therapeutic on an individual level, but we must become much more critical in interrogating how these individual experiences and affective orientations are congealed into collective forms of commemoration, the task of commemorative architecture. As designers and architects, we must grapple with the fact that overcoming difference does not produce harmony without negating discordant voices, that every act of remembrance is an act of forgetting something else. Therefore, the question is not how we choose which narrative to remember but rather how we develop a commemorative practice other than affirmation, one open to interpretation, to other possible recollections of the past.

With this in mind, through an elective seminar and the Boghosian Fellowship at Syracuse University School of Architecture, we sought to produce a commemorative atmosphere of impasse. Unfolding from and relating back to the site and the events which transpired there, we sought to engender feelings of unresolved tension through design. Through an iterative ceramic slipcasting process, which began from the topography of the site itself, we sought to produce structures that destabilize the very possibility of clear, distinct, and fixed modes of historical recollection, revealing the seemingly neutral affective flows of the site, the seemingly normative narrations of the past, as highly charged and contested (Figure 2). As both a doubling of the newly paved asphalt in the road as well as an expansion of its affective circulations, our tiled road installation offers a commemorative language of impasse that does not overcome, a feeling and language of potentiality, of becoming, of stretching meaning, and of irresolution.

Starting from the only objective aspect of the site, its literal material form—the ground itself—our design research explored alternatives to affirmation by enacting a series of iterative actions onto the site's topography that simultaneously reified and undermined various interpretations of it, that simultaneously claimed and disqualified the possibility of a solid ground. Our road installation took on the dimensions (20 by 8 feet) of the replaced asphalt at Canfield Drive, but was further subdivided into pentagonal tiles, each 4-inches per side length. Each tile was cast from a mold which indexed the topography of the site at 1:100 scale, thus producing affective relays between

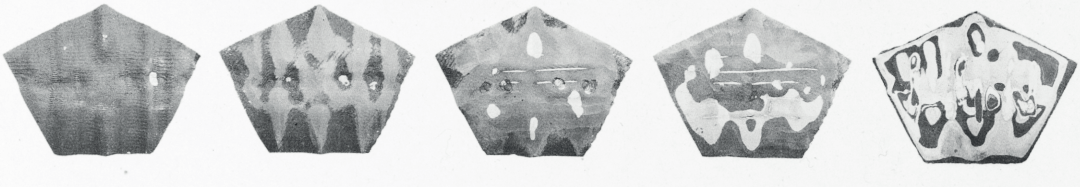


**Figure 2.** Excavation of layered color slipcast pieces. (Photograph by students Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain.)

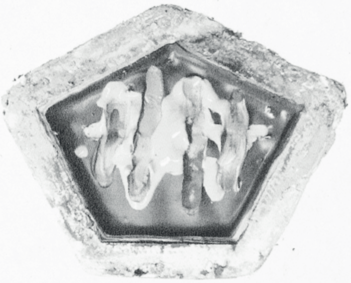


**Figure 3.** Pushing and pulling clay during slipcasting. (Photograph by students Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain.)

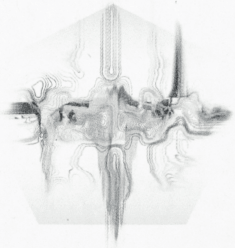
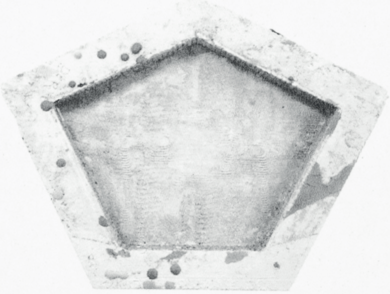


**Figure 4.** Topographic plaster mold. (Photograph by students Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain.)



the tile, the aggregate road installation, and the site itself. The tiles took on the pattern of a Cairo grid so that even in its aggregation no affirmative or linear reading was possible; each tile is constantly negated and affirmed by its various 5 neighbors (Figure 3). Thus, rather than stabilizing meaning, we liquidated our markers, watching them slip among competing affective economies. Our aim was to expose so-called fixed memory, fixed identity, and fixed history as nothing more than traces of memories, identities, and histories, each stable only for a fleeting moment and then gone. The atmospheric, as opposed to the affirmative, reveals that any singular recollection has no solid ground, or rather it reveals the impossibility of solid ground at all—even when the ground itself may literally be made of solid matter.

Using ceramic slipcasting—a technique commonly employed in the mass production of ceramics—we developed an iterative "thinking by making" protocol that offers, through its processes and products, an atmospheric alternative to conventional affirmative practices of architectural preservation and reconstruction. Inherent in the process of slipcasting is the acknowledgment that every act of remembrance is an act of forgetting. Every iterative cast, we argue, corrodes the original, the mold, and the other casts but at the same time also establishes new relationships, affective flows with each of these other objects. In this way, slipcasting disrupts the possibility for singular narratives, fixed histories, or stable recollections. Through atmospheric relays, the process of slipcasting necessarily reveals the instability of place, objects, memory, and histories.

K. Michael Hays described our process of slipcasting as post-linguistic: "It is the jouissance of slipcasting and the pleasure—the painful pleasure—that in slipcasting you don't know what the object is. Is that the object? Or is the mold the object? Or is the CNC-routed foam—that made the mold—is that the object?"[8] There is an impossibility of knowing, an impossibility of fixing or stabilizing that is inherent to the process of reproduction in slipcasting. Unlike words, which attempt to fix and stabilize meaning, slipcasting reveals that words (fixed meanings and stable interpretations) have already become inadequate. In this confrontation with the limits of language (like affirmative commemorative practice), our design research pursues a post-language (or paralanguage) approach—an atmosphere of commemoration—where remembrance can happen without affirming, where one can speak without words, where one remembers that remembrance is forgetting. Through the jouissance of slipcasting, which reveals the impossibility of affirming, we hope to open up commemorative practice to new potentials, possibilities, and interpretations.

The commemorative atmosphere of impasse that we sought to instantiate is paralinguistic, as it constitutes language through its ability to both exceed language and be excluded from the limitations of language. Instead of designing memorials that clearly delineate the site/s from which we work, we produce commemorative pieces through a series of relays between things, through atmosphere, not things in themselves. Rather than thinking of commemorative practices as static fixed narratives or objects, we think of atmosphere as a constant movement between signs and objects; as the relay of relationships, transferences, traces, indexical markers, processes, and mirrors produced in between. Atmosphere describes a reality that is always already fleeting, always becoming, never stable. And the commemorative practices that emerge make little—if any—explicit reference to the site/s and historical occurrences from which they are drawn.

In the case of Canfield Drive, we explored the site through two different scalar processes: (1) iterative slipcasting, and (2) iterative excavation within the slipcast artifacts. The former began with a single master plaster mold repeatedly used to cast seemingly identical ceramic copies. One relay, one impossibility, emerged from the fact

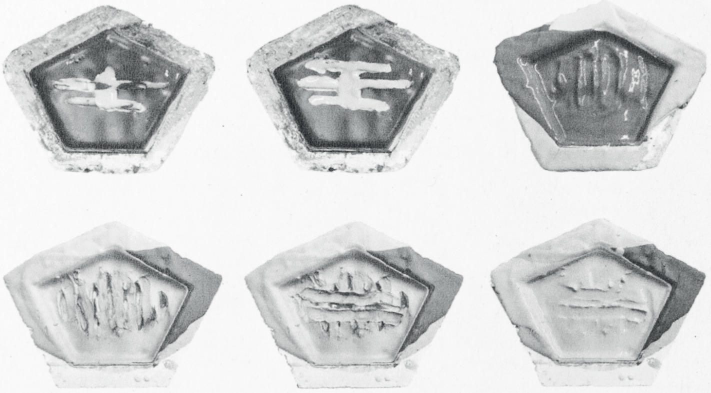


**Figure 5.** Process photographs depicting disruptive horizontal sequence. (Photograph by students Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain.)

that another mold (a double negative) was needed to cast the plaster mold (Figure 4). In addition, the multiple copies cast from the plaster mold were never precisely identical. Thus, within this supposedly repetitive process of mechanical reproduction, of iteratively casting ground of the site itself, difference already exists. In slipcasting—like the affective conditions of any site, place, or recollection of the past—the affective economies that circulate are never oriented all in the same direction, even if we intend them to be. These contradictory differences, experienced as atmosphere, as relay, throw terms like copy and original (fixed history and singular narratives) into question.

Making difference operative at the second scalar level, we poured colored slip into the mold in layers that were then revealed through a process of excavation. Plaster is highly water absorbent; thus, when slip—ceramic in a suspended liquid state—is poured into a plaster mold, a solid layer is formed along all surface contacts between the slip and the mold. This solid layer thickens over time. Once the desired thickness was reach, we poured out the excess liquid slip to produce a hollow cast, which thus became the first colored layer. We then poured another color of slip into the mold and then allowed it to thicken before pouring out the excess, repeating the process with another color of slip. Akin to archeology, by stratifying the slipcast into color layers, we allowed for a registration of time as well as of any interaction with the cast through time. Next, we performed different processes on these layers: some layers were allowed to thicken longer than others; some layers were gouged during the casting process; some layers were pushed and pulled, tarnished, or stomped on. Concealed by the first layer of colored slip, these actions only became visible through excavation. Once removed from the mold, the cast's topography was excavated to reveal the differences embedded in each tile's process of becoming (Figure 5). The excavation at once removed the topography while simultaneously revealing as color traces, producing an affective relay between the lost topography and the indexical colors that remain. Like the forgetfulness necessary for the work of memory to take place, the topography's destruction was necessary for the topography that remained, gathering together contradictory processes to prevent the event from being put to rest, forcing us to remain within the impasse.

In this way, the cast series does not take a position on either side of the impasse. It remains a continuous negotiation between sides. It makes legible multiple meanings, recollections, and truths but not at the cost of one overcoming another. As an iterative process, slipcasting allows each cast to contribute to an accumulation of meanings, of affective circulations, of relationships between narratives developing through time and recorded in a material state, each one questioning the last. Their process of becoming is as important as the pieces themselves. It is through their process of becoming that we intertwined impasse with the ground itself; literally and atmospherically. The slipcast artifacts are understood together and, yet, are separate; from the site, from one another, from the mold in which they were cast and from the mold in which the mold was cast. Thus, through the relay of each cast and mold, an accumulation of atmospheric affects takes place; the meaning of the commemorative practice becomes open, announcing through color and excavation an "unsharp" feeling where the distinctions between colors and layers is still palpable, but the meaning of these colors and layers is trapped in contestation, in obscurity.

In the end, what we see is not Canfield Drive but the affective effects made possible through the Wilson–Brown encounter as well as the political and racial fault lines that erupted because of this

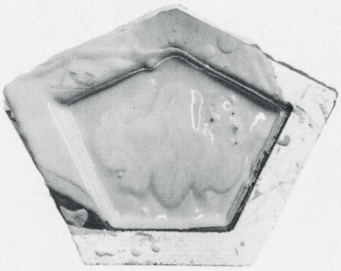


**Figure 6.** Process photographs depicting the excessive addition of the uncanny yellow slip. (Photograph by students Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain.)

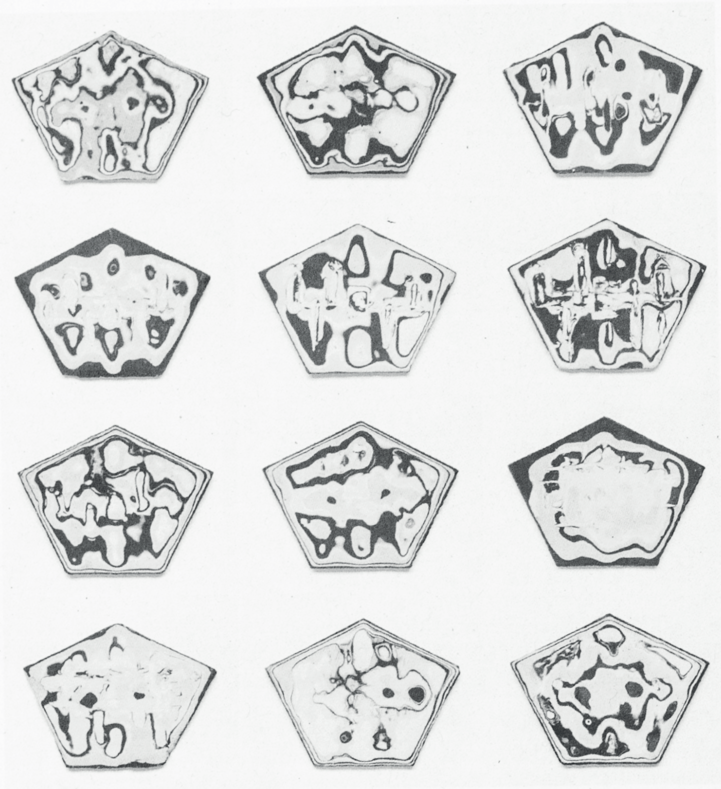


**Figure 7.** Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain,"Running through the bullets // Running from the bullets," a slipcast series illustrating tile development and variation. (Photographs by David Broda.)

encounter. As such, the relationship of the tiles to Canfield Drive is never directly namable, precisely because it is atmospheric. This can be seen in the iterative cast series "Running *through* the Bullets // Running *from* the Bullets," by our students Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain who questioned

> whether Michael Brown was running through the bullets, or whether he was running from them. The presence of opposing directionalities on site exemplifies both the physical transportation system of the road and sidewalk, as well as a more symbolic connotation in regard to the black lives matter versus blue lives matter movements. The road is in constant opposition depending on the side in which you travel. As an interstitial indicator, double lines mark the middle of the road. These double lines act as a neutral zone between opposing grains. We can question the role of this neutral zone, when Michael Brown's body interrupts them, laying neither [to the] left nor [to the] right but directly in the middle.[9]

Exploring the physical and affective directionalities of the site and its disruption, Baldassin and McClain physically pushed and pulled the clay material during its process of becoming (Figure 6). The plaster mold mapped both the site's topographical landscape as well as its embedded grains including, but not limited to, the directionality of opposing storylines along which these events occurred (Figure 7). On a road, one moves either to or from, marked by the yellow line in the middle of the road. The line keeps the opposing directions of flow in order. Laying atop the middle of the road, Michael Brown's body, however, disrupted these flows both in terms of traffic but also in terms of the Black Lives Matter and Blue Lives Matter movements. Thus, Baldassin and McClain used additional actions performed during the slipcasting process to produce a disruptive "horizontal sequence" that complicated these physical flows and immaterial storylines (Figure 8).

This horizontal sequence acted as a disruptive vector within the site's affective economy not because of its magnitude, but because it simply did not follow the direction of flow, causing an eruption into atmosphere. The other affective orientations, although oppositional, flowed parallel to the road. Perpendicular to the line that conveyed the road, each layer of color slip was pushed or pulled, disrupting the directionality of the plaster mold's topography. This push/pull, this movement back and forth, articulates the disruption of a singular narrative and therefore serves to also disrupt the affective orientations of opposing storylines. The horizontal sequence, like Michael Brown's body, forces us to recognize that the road is not a neutral place; rather, it was always oriented. In fact, the ability of the body (and the horizontal sequence) to disrupt the phenomenology of the road at all depends on the pre-existence of directionalities to begin with. Thus, the previously unassuming and natural processes of directionality, grain, movement, and becoming were disrupted so that we perceive and wrestle with them; we are forced to become aware of them, *feel* them, and thus dwell among and in between them.

Like the site, for Baldassin and McClain, the disruption was evident not only through forces and actions but also in the material and as color. "In the beginning of our process, we interrupt with yellow [slip], bringing an uncanny presence to each of these nodes in the storyline. Unsettling in its alienated eerie existence, the yellow sits among colors that are closer to each other…when these opposing grains of vertical delineations and horizontal sequencing intersect through the action of *running from or through*, they cause volatile disruptions to the normative understanding of directionality."[10] By giving the horizontal sequence its own material color, the atmosphere becomes physical, just as the yellow lines in the road marks our agreed upon conventions about travel (Figure 9). Strikingly in the cast series, the yellow always appears out of place. It is notably different from the other color layers, and this difference is felt even if why or how it operates is not yet understood or namable. More than anything else, we are disrupted by the horizontal sequence, haunted even by the affect of the uncanny yellow, pushed and pulled, when it should not have been there in the first place (Figure 10). This uncanniness manifests itself as an impasse, as a feeling of perpetual disorientation that does not allow us to affirm the validity of our historical perspective unscathed.

Through the slipcasting process, we encourage people to think through atmosphere, dwelling on the uncanniness of the site instead of seeking resolution. Atmosphere allows for the accumulation of diverse affective directionalities rather than trying to resolve them on the site, through architecture, or in one direction. In that space of accumulation, conceptual and historical frames of reference are called into question, opening up the possibility for new and different modes of perception, engagement, and, yes, even memory to occur. Ultimately, we search for an architecture of potential and possibility, not of affirmation or fixation, which allows for eruptions and events to take place that otherwise could not have occurred. Through its placement in the road and its symmetrical paving over the double lines that should divide the two sides and two directions of the road, Canfield Drive itself remains at an impasse, spatially, political, figuratively, and philosophically. In this way, the road operates like Loos's mound, though located in a suburb, being slightly larger than six feet long by three feet wide, and being shaped by a paving machine: "we turn serious and something in us says: here someone lies buried. That is architecture."[11]

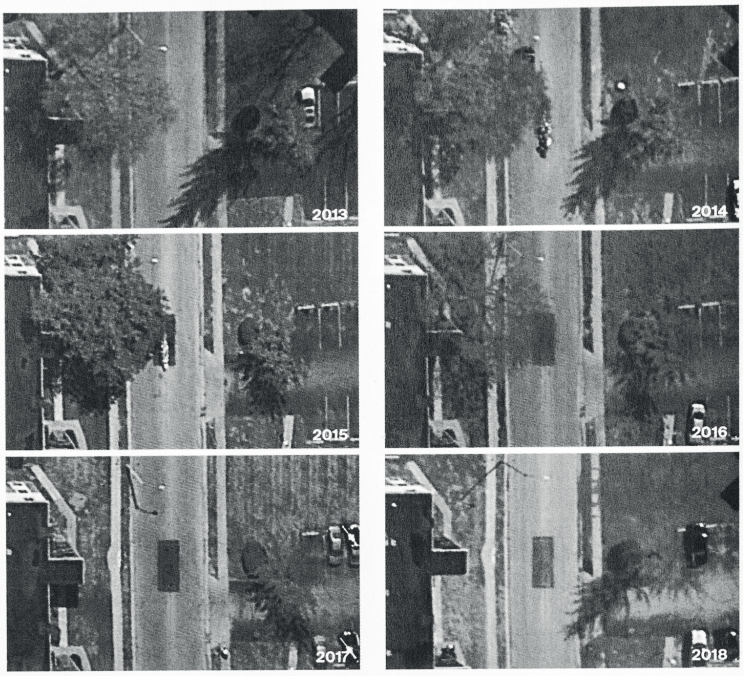
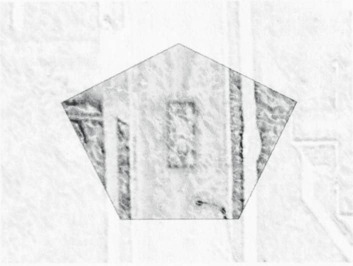


**Figure 8.** Canfield Drive from 2013 to 2018. (Images © Google Earth 2018 Digital Globe.)

**Figure 9.** Topography of the site in relation to the plaster mold of the ceramic tiles. (Illustration by Linda Zhang.)



## Author Biographies

Linda Zhang is a principal at Studio Pararaum and an assistant professor at Ryerson University School of Interior Design (RSID). She was the 2017–2018 Boghosian Fellow at Syracuse University School of Architecture as well as a 2017 fellow at the Berlin Center for Art and Urbanistics. Her research areas include memory, cultural heritage, identity politics, material processes (namely casting and ceramics), and digital reproduction technologies. Zhang's work has been exhibited internationally in Canada, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, and the United States.

Biko Mandela Gray is an assistant professor of religion at Syracuse University. His research areas include continental philosophy, history of African American religions, and affect theory. He is currently working on a book, tentatively titled *Black Life Matter*, that explores the connection between race, matter and embodiment, religion, and subjectivity through the lens of the Black Lives Matter movement.

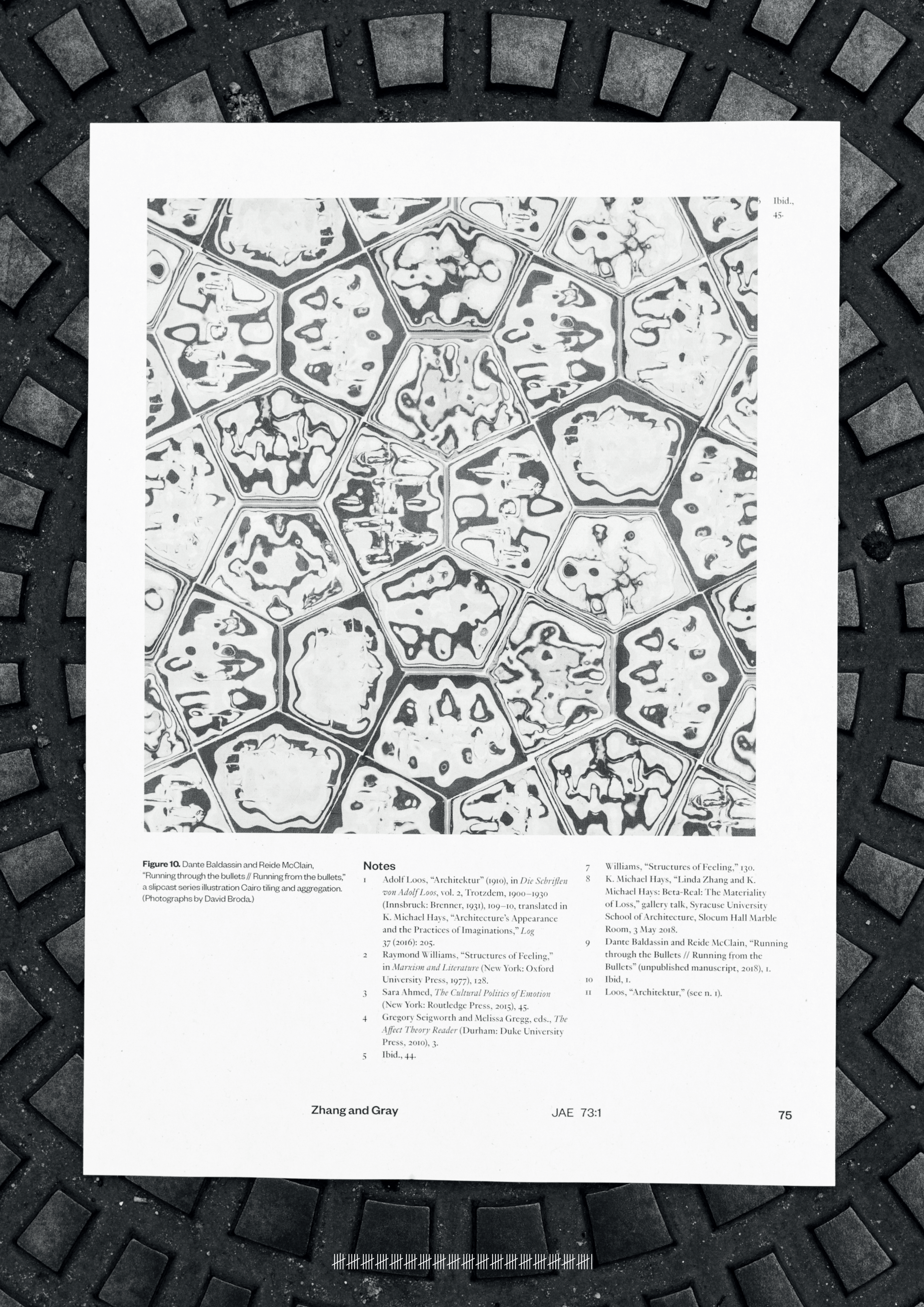


**Figure 10.** Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain, "Running through the bullets // Running from the bullets," a slipcast series illustration Cairo tiling and aggregation. (Photographs by David Broda.)

## Notes

1 Adolf Loos, "Architektur" (1910), in *Die Schriflen von Adolf Loos*, vol. 2, Trotzdem, 1900–1930 (Innsbruck: Brenner, 1931), 109–10, translated in K. Michael Hays, "Architecture's Appearance and the Practices of Imaginations," *Log* 37 (2016): 205.

2 Raymond Williams, "Structures of Feeling," in *Marxism and Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 128.

3 Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge Press, 2015), 45.

4 Gregory Seigworth and Melissa Gregg, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 3.

5 Ibid., 44.

Ibid., 45.

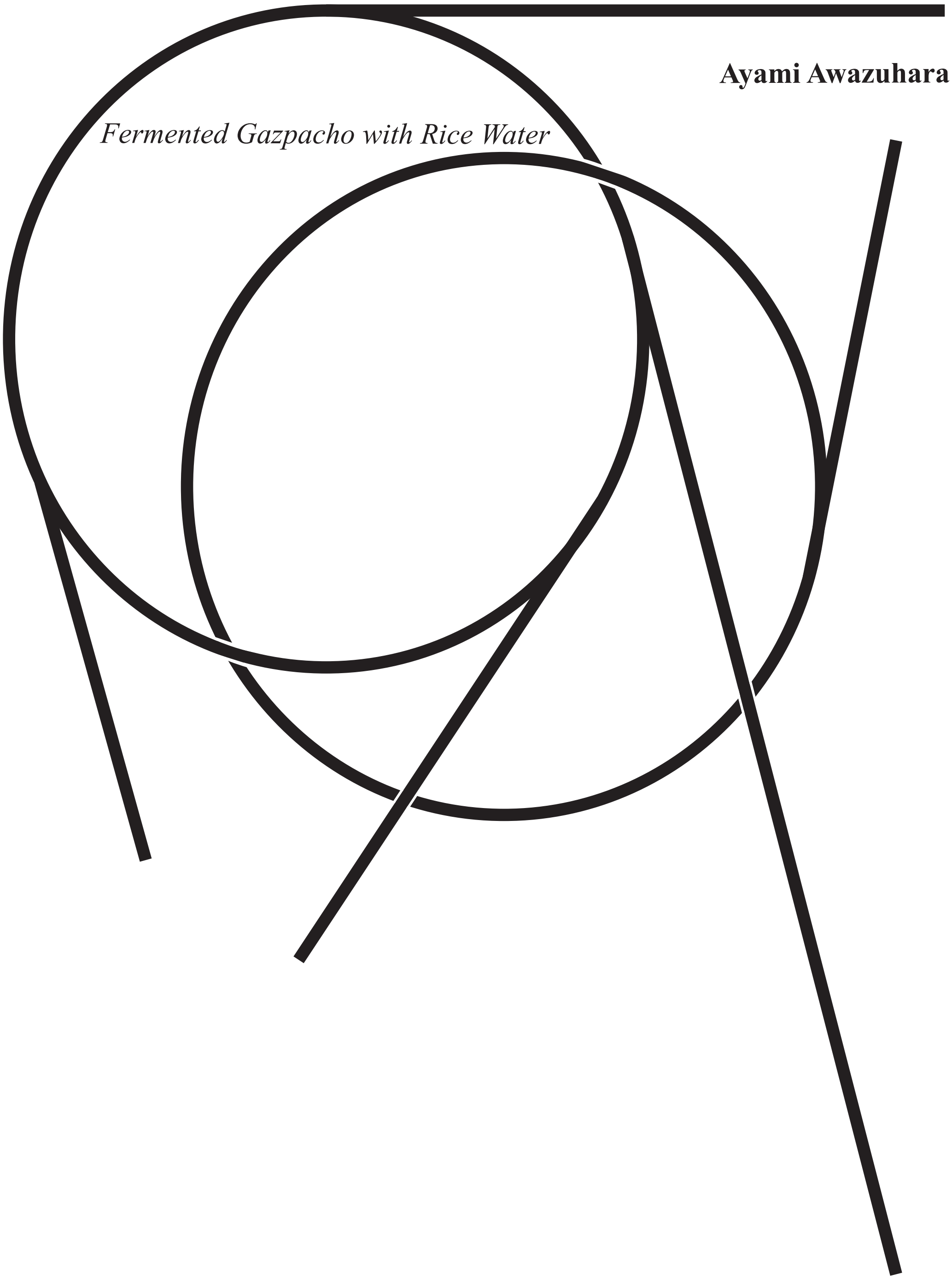
7 Williams, "Structures of Feeling," 130.

8 K. Michael Hays, "Linda Zhang and K. Michael Hays: Beta-Real: The Materiality of Loss," gallery talk, Syracuse University School of Architecture, Slocum Hall Marble Room, 3 May 2018.

9 Dante Baldassin and Reide McClain, "Running through the Bullets // Running from the Bullets" (unpublished manuscript, 2018), 1.

10 Ibid, 1.

11 Loos, "Architektur," (see n. 1).



## *Fermented Gazpacho with Rice Water*

**Ayami Awazuhara**

**Ayami Awazuhara** looks for the consequences of hybrid cultural appropriation and transitional processes in the every day and omnipresent. Her practice, which results in installations, artist's books, videos and photographs as well as in performances and sound, takes everyday objects as a starting point for a reflection on systems of classification.

*Fermented Gazpacho with Rice Water* was published on the occasion of the event *Hands to Mouth*, held at The Institute for Endotic Research in March 2019.

This recipe is
very rich in
lactic acid bacteria

# Fermented Gazpacho with Rice Water

6 - 8 portions

A:
2 cups of white rice ← "Milchreis" is good
600 ml water
8 g salt

B:
2 cucumbers, peeled and chopped in 2 - 3 cm cubes
1 red onion, peeled and roughly chopped
1 pear, peeled and sliced ← replaceble with apple
1 garlic clove, peeled and crushed
1 piece of ginger, the size of a garlic clove, peeled and thinly sliced
+ if you find, put 5cm of dried Kombu

1 kg of fresh tomatoes
3 - 4 tbs olive oil

1/3 of a baguette or any white bread
↳ could be fresh or old dried bread

Wash the rice with water until the water is a cloudy white.
Remove the rice, retaining the water and add the salt.
↳ cook and eat afterward

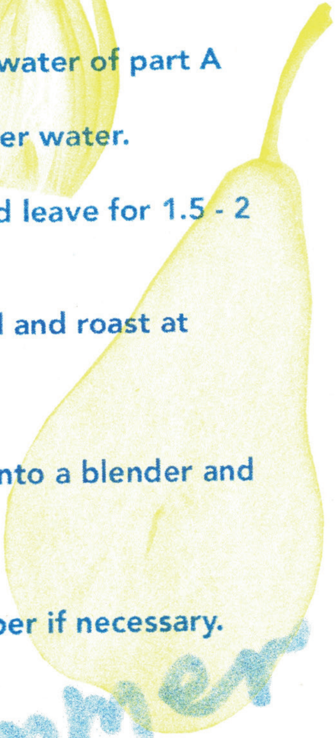
Place the ingredients of part B into a jar, and pour the rice water of part A over.
Make sure that the vegetables are completely covered under water.

Close the jar with an air-tight lid or cover with cling film and leave for 1.5 - 2 days at room temperature until bubbles start to emerge.
glass jar is fun

Put the tomatoes on a baking tray, drizzle with the olive oil and roast at 200°C for 30 min.
Set aside to cool. Peel off the skin.

Put the vegetable mixture, grilled tomatos and the bread into a blender and puree until smooth.

Place in the fridge to cool down.
When cool, taste and add additional salt and/or black pepper if necessary.
Ladle into bowls and drizzle with olive oil to serve.



Hi Summer!